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The experience of international
students with English L2 in a
Scottish further education
college

Doctorate in Education (EdD)

Education (CREET)

Angela Smith MA, MEd, BSc (Hons)

Thesis submitted October 2013 to the Open University in
partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Doctorate in
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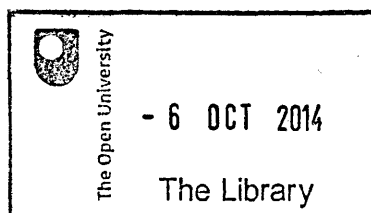
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Abstract

In the early years of the twenty-first century, Scottish Further Education Colleges experienced a decline in student intake as a result of demographic changes and competition within the tertiary education sector. As a result, one such college actively sought new students from outside its core student base, specifically targeting both international students and migrant workers, most of whom speak English as a second language. Subsequently, these students have often been perceived by the academic staff as not achieving their full academic potential because of issues around English language competence. This thesis takes a case study approach, drawing on sociocultural theory, to examine the experiences of five such students and their lecturers in the college, in order to explore factors contributing to this perceived lack of success. The research used semi-structured interviews, as well as learning centre observations, college marketing and policy documentation and an analysis of statistical data on student academic attainment. The interviews gave five students an opportunity to talk about their experiences of the college as well as allowing eight staff members to relate their perceptions of the students. Staff were also asked about the challenges they faced as professionals in meeting the required learning outcomes of the curriculum, while balancing the needs of students with those of the college. Both thematic and discourse analysis were applied to the data to explore structural themes

suggested by the research questions around language competence, language support, educational expectations and both staff/student and student/student relationships. This analysis also exposed specific emergent themes for each group: for the students, conflicting identities as they try to balance the opportunity costs of their investment in their education against other aspects of their life: and, for the lecturers, perceptions of the 'ideal student' and their own professional identity.

Chapter 1: Focus of the research

1.1 Context

The research took place at a Further Education¹ (FE) college in Scotland which, at the time of the research, was undergoing change in terms of its physical location, funding and student population. The college covered a large geographical area with a main campus and a smaller satellite campus eighty miles away. During the period of the research the main campus was moved to a new purpose-built site.

The demographics of the catchment areas were of an ageing population thus a continuous decline in local student recruitment was projected. To counteract this reduction the college actively sought to recruit international students from the People's Republic of China (PRC), appointing a native Mandarin speaker to the position of International Development Officer (IDO).

Historically, the college did not attract students who spoke English as a second language in any great numbers. Of the 1690 full time students who enrolled at the college in 2008 only 32 (1.89%)

¹ Further Education in the Scottish context is post-compulsory education offering courses from basic skills to higher vocational training such as City and Guilds, Higher National Certificates (HNC) and Higher National Diplomas (HND).

students declared that they spoke a language other than English as a first language with 20 different languages listed (see Appendix A).

Most students who were second language speakers were not international students as defined by the Students' Award Agency for Scotland (SAAS) (see section 1.4) because they were either European Union citizens or had lived and/or worked in Scotland for three years before enrolling. The college launched an international recruitment programme in 2009 recruiting twenty students from the PRC for the 2009/2010 academic year. Of the PRC students, some only attended the college for 3-6 months and did not take assessments while others took a Higher National Certificate (HNC) and attended for the full academic year.

During this time there was a large migration of Eastern European workers into the area, employed across a wide spectrum of industries. Anecdotal evidence suggests that, while some wished to stay in Scotland, others intended to return home. Some migrant workers brought families and their children attended Scottish schools. The college provided English as a second language (ESOL) courses as a pathway to attract these migrant workers and their families into further education across the full range of vocational

courses² offered. The increasing number of L2 students attending FE colleges in Scotland means that the educational experience of this group of students has become increasingly important to educators (Wu and Hammond, 2011:423; Arnold, 2013:297) but previous research in this area primarily focused upon undergraduate students at University with L2 students in further education receiving relatively little attention.

In addition to demographic changes, the college also experienced financial challenges. A sustained period of low interest-rates had reduced the amount of income the college received from bank deposits. Moreover, government cutbacks, resulting from the financial crisis of the early 21st century, meant that total student funding (and thus income) was capped. Rising unemployment resulted in a surge of new students enrolling in the college but these additional students did not attract additional funding. The cumulative reduction in college income resulted in a number of staff cuts which included voluntary redundancy and a reduction in working hours³ for some permanent staff while temporary staff did not have their

² The college offered Access level courses designed to deliver an introduction to a given subject as well as teaching study-skills to students with no formal academic qualifications.

³ Full-time staff worked 35 hours each week with 24 hours student contact-time (timetabled teaching-time).

contracts renewed. Obtaining additional fee-income from international students was viewed as an important new income-stream to replace losses in other areas.

1.2 Background and Motivation for the research

1.2.1 Background to the research

First opened in 2001 to address concerns around student retention, the ILC was initially funded by the European Social Fund and the Scottish Government via the local Adult Literacy Partnership. While students withdrawing from college reported that finance was a major factor in their decision to leave, internal research noted that there was a spike in student withdrawals immediately prior to the first submission of assessments (Beech, 2000). The timing of this research coincided with a report on literacy which concluded that 23% of Scots had basic skills difficulties (Edinburgh City Council/Scottish Executive, 2000) resulting in public and political disquiet over the standard of literacy. Lea and Street (1998:38) writing about Higher Education argued '...many academic staff claim that students can no longer write.' The combination of the report, academic literature and internal research led senior college managers to believe that lack of basic skills was a factor in student retention and so the ILC was founded as a means of supporting students' basic skills, thus increasing student retention.

The job title of the ILC staff was 'Basic Skills Facilitator' and they were graded as support rather than academic staff. The ILC only closed on public holidays so staff did not have academic holidays but were only allowed to take holidays outwith term time. Initially two basic skills facilitators were employed but within a year this increased to three facilitators (one at the satellite campus) and one Basic Skills manager. There were concerns from the lecturing union (EIS) that ILC staff would become low-cost lecturers but assurances were given that ILC staff would not support course content and would only provide general basic skills support.

Initially the minimum qualification expected of staff was a Higher National Diploma although later this changed to a bachelor's degree. Staff training consisted of a local council adult literacy training course in literacy and numeracy. ILC staff were not required to be qualified to teach, and indeed one application for staff development to take part in a pilot Teaching Qualification for Adult Literacy and Numeracy was refused on the grounds that the qualification was not necessary for the position, despite the course being funded by the Scottish Government and therefore of no cost to the college.

| Number of staff | Qualifications | TESOL Qualifications |
|-----------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | MA, MEd, BSc | CELTA |
| 1 | Dip Education (Primary Ed) | none |
| 1 | BA | none |
| 1 | HND | none |

Table 1: Qualifications of ILC Staff at the time of the research.

1.2.2 Pedagogical Practices

In line with funding conditions, the ILC was expected to follow the Scottish learner-centred approach to literacy where the skills that the learner brings to the learning opportunity are used to scaffold skills to new knowledge (Vygotsky, 1985; Learning Connection, 2005, p17).

In this approach learning should be relevant to the learner at the particular point in their life that they find themselves. This meant that tutors did not have to follow a rigid curriculum but could adapt teaching content and methods to suit the learner. This 'social practice' model sees literacy as a social construct rather than a set of technical skills to be mastered (Lillis, 2001; Learning Connections, 2005; Turner, 2011).

The dilemma for the ILC was that, on the one hand, staff were working within a social practice model of literacy while, on the other, college students were expected to write in Standard English following academic conventions. Writing about family literacies in Scotland at the time of the ILC's foundation, Tett, (who was then Chair of the Community Learning Research Network for Scotland) argued that the

literacy practices of working-class families in Scotland were considered to be substandard and 'marginalised by a system that privileges middle-class, English, school-based literacies' (Tett, 2000:52). There was therefore a recognition that the current literacy practices of the L1 students did not align with the literacy practices associated with academic study. However, despite Lee and Street's (1998:159) claim that 'one explanation for problems in student writing might be the gaps between academic staff expectations and student interpretations of what is involved in student writing', these subject specific expectations were not explicitly communicated by the academic staff to the ILC staff.

The ILC's remit was to support all students who were in danger of withdrawing from their course because of poor basic skills in literacy and/or numeracy with initial emphasis on the L1 students but implicitly this role included supporting L2 students, who were often referred for English support rather than receiving support from their subject lecturers. An assumption was made that if staff could support Scottish students to write in standard English then they could also support L2 students to do the same, but there was an acknowledgement that the support L2 students needed was different. The ILC staff attended a basic, non-certificated two-day short course on teaching English to speakers of other languages provided by the local adult literacy partnership, covering cultural considerations and the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing as well as

teaching materials. Six years after the foundation of the ILC, one member of staff did gain the Cambridge Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (CELTA). The lack of experience in teaching English to speakers of other languages meant that despite the social practice ethos of the ILC, second language support developed along a 'technicist' model (Turner, 2011) dependent on traditional English language teaching books with an emphasis on grammar.

1.2.3 Motivation for the research

Before starting the research, my discussions with members of college staff suggested a perception that L2 students were, given their previous education or work experience, not reaching their full potential, and that they failed courses or passed with lower grades. In addition, they often failed to progress to higher-level courses because they either lacked confidence or had been advised against it by their lecturers during student information sessions prior to the start of the course. In these discussions, lack of English competence was often cited by lecturers as the reason for students failing to achieve their potential. As the manager with responsibility to support students' language competence and working, at least partially, within a social practice model I was not convinced by the argument that language was a technical issue and that it was the only factor causing the students difficulty and decided to investigate whether other factors might be involved. In order to establish the range of

support available to students, it was important to research the role played by lecturers and other staff in supporting the student. I was also interested to find out if the support offered by the ILC was appropriate and if it could be improved.

1.3 Research questions

The original intention of the research was to examine the whole-college experience of a number of students but it became apparent that this was too ambitious in the time available and that the research needed to be focussed on more specific areas of student experience. The research questions were finally formulated as follows:

1. What kind of challenges do students with English as a second language experience in relation to:
 - a. Issues of language competence.
 - b. English as a second language support.
 - c. Expectations about educational practices.
 - d. Relationships with staff and students.
2. How do these challenges impact on the college experiences of the students and their lecturers?

The research questions were addressed using case study methodology which gathered evidence mainly from semi-structured interviews but also from college documents and learner centre observations with analysis conducted using a combination of Thematic Analysis and Discourse Analysis.

1.4 Definition of terms

As this thesis adopts different definitions to those set out by Scottish Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS), this section defines the terms used by SAAS (see Appendix B) and explains the reasons for adopting different definitions for this research.

1.4.1 International students

For funding purposes, 'International Students' are those students who are not citizens of the European Union (EU) or EU citizens who have not been resident in the UK for three years prior to the commencement of their education. This definition could therefore include students from English speaking nations such as Australia and America for whom English is their first language but who also may have been educated in English. For this reason this term was not used to describe the case study students as the focus of interest was on students who did not speak English as their first language and had previously been educated in a language other than English.

1.4.2 Home students

Again for funding purposes, home students are those students who are citizens of the European Union (including Scottish students but

excluding the rest of the UK⁴) and have been resident in the UK for three years prior to the commencement of their education. Home students can therefore encompass a wide variety of students in terms of English language competence and experience of English as a medium of education so this term was also not used for the purposes of the research.

1.4.3 L1 students

I have adopted the term 'L1' to describe students who speak English fluently and who have had most, if not all, of their education in English. The term includes not only those students who would consider English to be their mother-tongue but also those students who speak other languages at home, for example Scottish Gaelic or Urdu. The use of L1 students is not used to diminish the importance of any other language in the students' lives but to highlight their fluency in English and experience of English as a medium of education.

1.4.4 L2 students

As the term 'L1 students' describes fluent English speakers who have been mainly educated in English, so therefore 'L2 students' is used

⁴ Students from the rest of the UK (and Scottish students who have exhausted their funding entitlement or already have a qualification at the same or higher level of current study) pay fees at a home student rate which varies with the course but is currently (2013) set at a maximum of £9,000).

to describe students who speak English as an additional language and who arrived in Scotland as an adult or an older teenager and so experienced most of their education via a language other than English. In such circumstances, as well as not being fluent in English, such students are not familiar with the cultures of Scotland in general or the Scottish education system in particular.

1.5 Summary of context

This research has been conducted in response to a perception among college staff that L2 students were not reaching their full potential. It examines the perceptions of the educational experience of both L2 students and their lecturers to discover if there are barriers to L2 students' success. Providing appropriate support to all students is important and, by investigating the interaction of students' language competence and support, student and staff educational expectations and interactions with peers and college staff, this research will make a contribution to the understanding of where this might be needed. Interest in L2 student experience has increased with the number of L2 students in further education and previous research has tended to focus on higher education. While my research is small in scale, it explores issues which may be applicable to other FE colleges and therefore has broader potential relevance and use.

Chapter 2: Literature review

Within the United Kingdom there is an increasing number of L2 students in tertiary education and a growing interest in their educational experience, particularly the challenges they face 'in respect to language proficiency, academic expectations and social integration' (Wu and Hammond, 2011:423). These concerns are shaping educational policy and practice (Arnold, 2013:297). As discussed in section 1.2, in informal discussions prior to the research taking place, college staff reported that they felt that L2 students did not reach their full potential. This is in keeping with recent research which suggests that they do not perform as well as L1 students (Arnold, 2013:297; Frumkin and Koutsoubou, 2013:147). This chapter explores factors affecting the tertiary educational experiences of L2 students and their lecturers in a variety of settings, which are identified and discussed in the theoretical and research literature relevant to this area. For ease of comprehension, the chapter is divided into a number of sections covering different, though interconnected, topics which were suggested by the research questions. Issues around language competence (section 2.1) are examined before going on to discuss English as a second language support (section 2.2), expectations about educational practice (section 2.3), relationships with both peers and staff discussed (section 2.4), and the themes of identity, motivation and investment (section 2.5) which emerged from the data.

I argue that these topics should not be considered in isolation and, as Vygotsky (1986), Lantoff and Throne (2006) and Swain *et al.* (2011) argue in relation to sociocultural theory, individuals cannot be viewed in isolation because they are a product of society, its history and culture, which constrains and empowers them in their experience of new situations. Thus the educational experiences of the L2 students and their lecturers similarly cannot be viewed as an isolated classroom or language event but rather a complex and multifaceted educational experience with its roots in language, educational expectations and society at large.

There appears to be a gap in the literature on the subject of L2 students in FE colleges. Research about L2 students has concentrated on Higher Education at University level in North America (Fallon and Brown, 1999; Le Roux, 2001; Peelo and Luxon, 2007; Zamel, 2004; Ellery, 2008; Harrison and Peacock, 2010). Although there are college level studies in other European countries such as Severiens and Wolff (2008), studies in Scottish FE colleges have concentrated on the inclusion of people with disabilities (e.g. Hyland and Merril, 2003). This may be due to universities having more international students than FE colleges. However by focussing on the inclusion of L2 students at a Scottish FE college this research has the potential to make a modest, original contribution on this subject.

2.1 Issues around language competence

For L2 students English language competence is a key concern as it not only impacts on their academic achievement but also, on their ability to integrate socially with other students. It plays a key role linking an individual's cognitive development with their social and cultural development (Vygotsky, 1986). Failure to develop English language competence can therefore lead not only to academic difficulties but also to social isolation which impacts on a student's well-being (Wu and Hammond, 2011:425). The focus in this subsection, as in the related research question, is on the relationship between language competence and academic achievement, while issues around social relationships will be discussed under subsection 2.4.

2.1.1 Engaging with disciplinary knowledge

Even where an L2 student has a good standard of fluency in English, research on academic writing in particular has highlighted the fact that college performance is linked to specialised knowledge and skills (Murphy and Fleming, 2000:86) and particular language practices help to shape the content and form of knowledge (Vygotsky, 1978). Traditional English language teaching with its emphasis on grammar allows students to achieve high scores in tests but does not prepare them for academic writing (Wu and Hammond, 2011:430). Writing initially in relation to young learners, Cummins made the distinction between the language of social interaction, which he termed 'basic

interpersonal communicative skills' (BICS), and 'cognitive academic language proficiency' (CALP), namely 'the students ability to understand and express, in both oral and written modes, concepts and ideas that are relevant to success in school' (Cummins, 2008:71). Arguably this distinction could also be made for adult learners given that some adult L1 students also are not proficient in academic English (Lillis, 2001:21). These arguments would suggest that it is difficult for either potential students or lecturers to judge if someone's English language competence is sufficient for academic study as the traditional markers of language competence, success in grammatical tests or the ability to function linguistically on a day to day basis, are not necessarily good indicators of academic English competence.

Academic writing is vitally important as it is used to not only assess students but to help them explore and consolidate their knowledge (Lillis, 1997:183). However, where L2 students use examples or stories from their own culture to illustrate academic points these may not be easily translated into English and the meaning may be lost (Connor, 1996:3-5; Mayor and Swann, 2002:115-116). This limitation upon the use of expressions, examples and wisdom from another language and culture may clearly disadvantage L2 students' comprehension and expressive ability, particularly where they are unable to access English equivalents. Language is the medium used to assess knowledge and when L2 students cannot express

themselves fully they are in danger of being judged not only as incompetent language users but as incompetent generally because their language is assessed rather than their academic abilities (Le Roux, 2001:274-275).

2.1.2 Standards of academic English

Lecturers worry that if they accept lower standards of academic English, it will engender a belief in the students that academic discourse does not matter and standards will fall (Zamel, 2004:12-13; Kutz, 1986:385). Assignment feedback heavily focussed on grammar and the rules of English rather than on content can lead to students adjusting their perception of what is important and focusing on structure rather than content which inevitably leads to under-performance and poor grades. Focussing on deficiencies, rather than achievements, can leave the students feeling inadequate and discouraged (Zamel, 2004:9).

The focus on correcting the students' grammatical errors suggests that grammar is regarded as a technical skill (Turner, 2011:31), and the word 'correction' implies that students are deficient (Rose, 1985:16). When lecturers concentrate on language deficits, students often believe that they are not given credit for their hard work and that it is discounted and viewed as limited (Zamel, 2004:9).

The New Literacy Studies sees literacy as a context-based social practice (Ivanic, 1997:65; Lillis, 2001:34-35) which has many forms,

one of which is academic writing. Academic English is itself evolving and changing (Scarcella, 2003:8), with academic institutions and disciplines having different conventions/criteria for success (Hewings, *et al.*, 2007:228) which they often fail to make explicit to the students (Lillis, 2001:22). Street argues that students need to be familiar with all aspects of academic discourse as the skills needed to take part in a tutorial are different from those needed in a lecture: equally essay writing requirements can vary between academic subjects (Street, 2010:232). This suggests that there are no absolutely incorrect forms of writing, just inappropriate ones for the relevant context. By not making explicit their particular requirements for academic writing, academic institutions and their lecturers give the impression that *their* preferred form of writing is the natural or only way to write, which can demoralise those students judged as deficient (Zamel, 2004:9).

Michelle Cliff, in her account of writing both in English and Patois, felt that writing in Patois was inadequate for academic writing leading to negative feelings about her home and culture: 'While we long for our homeland we are shamed for it and ourselves at the same time' (Cliff, 1985:34). This observation is supported by Connor who writes that, by holding up Anglo-American writing conventions as the standard to achieve, the student is encouraged to 'look down upon' the writing conventions of their home country (Connor, 1996:25).

Lack of competence in English language skills has been seen as a motivation for plagiarism. Ellery (2008) defines plagiarism as 'using

someone else's ideas, words or data without proper acknowledgement and presenting it as your own work' (p.509). Internet plagiarism which supplements the traditional methods of copying phrases or large tracts from text books or journals is seen as an increasing problem (Selwyn, 2008:465; Kutz, *et al.*, 2011:15). Often L2 students are considered to be more at risk of plagiarism than L1 students, but this belief has not always been upheld in research (Ellery, 2008:509-511). Selwyn found that internet skills were a more important factor, with those possessing good skills more likely to use the internet to plagiarise (Selwyn, 2008:466).

2.1.3 Language support as a temporary need

Viewing the L2 students through the lens of a deficit model of bilingualism can lead staff to either withhold support/work placements or only offer them in a reduced or inappropriate way until the student addresses weaknesses in their English (Piller, 2011:142). Fallon and Brown (1999:46-47) argue that while lecturers claim that L2 students can bring benefits to the classroom they often see a student's English language level as a barrier to success and a problem. Lecturers often associate poor English with low-intelligence and use this as justification for academic underachievement (Le Roux, 2001:276-277), with failure seen as a justification of this opinion (Zamel, 2004:5). Tinto (1997:600) argues that the belief that the harder a student works the more successful they are likely to be can

be turned on its head, allowing lecturers to believe that struggling students are just not working hard enough.

Rose (1985) coined the term 'the myth of transience' to describe the perception that issues with L2 English language competence are temporary problems. He argues (p.27) that lecturers believe 'if only "x" were to happen all would be well within a generation' and that the status quo is maintained because those involved in education believe that 'the turmoil they [the students] are in will eventually pass'.

Lecturers believe that when the students' English language competence improves, parity with L1 students in the same class will be achieved. However, this belief that the problems the L2 students face are transient has three consequences:

- (a) it ignores all other issues such as cultural differences or specific learning difficulties,
- (b) it allows lecturers to give the students a negative identity and
- (c) it excuses lecturers from the need to examine and change their teaching practices

(based on Zamel, 2004:7).

Silence in the classroom is often blamed on poor language competence, gender and cultural stereotypes (Morita, 2004:586) but Morita also argues that it can be caused by lack of 'college

knowledge' (see also Murphy and Fleming, 2000:84) as well as other factors such as age or lack of work experience (Morita, 2004:588). Students not only must have something to say but also know and find the appropriate point to speak (Morita, 2004:587) and feel that someone will listen (Piller, 2011:146). While communication misunderstandings, confusions and silences can be blamed on cultural differences Piller also argues that this can disguise racism (Piller, 2011:142).

Students may be judged negatively for using a non-standard variety of English. The variety of language that a person uses is a marker of group membership and identity, but not all varieties are valued equally in the classroom (Le Roux, 2001:274), and English used as a *lingua franca* is not the same as that of an L1 English speaker (Seidlhofer, 2001:134). The language of the dominant group is represented as a "better" language (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004:3), and individuals learn the acceptable and common language use for the dominant culture and their position within it. Thus L2 students competent in the use of Standard English must learn the contextually appropriate form of English if they wish to be accepted by the dominant group (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004:1). This may involve a cultural adjustment/suppression of earlier ways of being or indeed may engender resistance. (Issues relating to the organisation of language support are dealt with more fully in section 2.2.)

2.1.4 Summary of issues related to language competence

Increasing numbers of L2 students in further education, has resulted in an increased interest in their educational experiences and problems they face. Although a sociocultural approach argues that education is a complex interaction of circumstances and interactions, the discussions held with college lecturers prior to the research taking place suggested that language competence was viewed as a remediable root of the students' problems. This technicist view also incorporates the 'myth of transience suggesting that all other problems will be resolved once the language problems are fixed. While language is undoubtedly important, the literature would suggest that simply learning more language is not the answer to the students' problems. The academic English language required for college is a social practice, different from that required on a day-to-day basis. However, the conventions of academic English can vary between disciplines, which are often not made explicit to students, leaving them frustrated and demoralised where lecturers concentrate assignment feedback on surface corrections rather than on the academic content. The inability of students to communicate effectively using academic English can lead to lecturers forming a deficit view of L2 students which justifies reduced support and excuses them from changing their teaching practice, all of which affects the student experience.

2.2 English as a second language support

2.2.1 Diagnosing needs

In English language teaching, language is commonly split into four different skills; listening and reading (reception skills), speaking and writing (production skills) (Pitt, 2005:78) which can develop unevenly in any given language learner. This uneven development poses a problem for those wishing to support academic language development as tailoring support to individual students' needs is dependent on good diagnostic testing. The college at the centre of this research did not have an L2 diagnostic test using instead a literacy core-skill diagnostic test for every student, which did not test writing ability but concentrated on spelling and grammar (see Appendix C) which, as argued in section 2.1 above, is not a good indicator of academic English competence. The college latterly required an IELTS⁵ score of 5.0 but this is generally accepted to be below the standard required for academic study (Mayor, 2006:104) thus the problem of diagnosing academic language competence in order to support its development remains.

Without a suitable diagnostic tool identification of support needs can fall to the students but Kruger and Dunning (1999:1121) argue that the skills needed to be competent are the same as those required to

⁵ International English-language Testing System

judge competence. Furthermore, they argue that within their data set self assessments tended to be over inflated (Kruger and Dunning, 1999:1122). Howell (1982:30-32) outlines a process of self awareness, describing five stages for developing interpersonal communication skills, which I would argue equally apply to the academic context. At first the learner feels they are doing better than they are, being unaware of their mistakes and shortcomings; this Howell calls *unconscious incompetence*. As the learner progressively realises that some strategies do not work they move into *conscious incompetence*, where understanding has yet to be achieved and errors are rectified by trial-and-error. As understanding grows, they move into the third stage of *conscious competence*, where the learner consciously monitors their own performance, making adjustments as necessary. As confidence in their own performance continues the *unconscious competence* stage is reached, with the learner no longer consciously analysing every word or gesture. Occasionally, the learner may attain the fifth stage, that of *unconscious super-competence*, with the learner operating at the peak of their performance (Howell, 1982:32). While Howell originally applied this theory to interpersonal communication, trainers in a variety of subjects have used the first four stages to explain the process of learning a new task or skill (see Thomson, *et al.*, 2006:9-11 for usage in a training context). Progression through these stages changes both the learner's perceptions of their language abilities and the language support required. Students do not always have an

accurate perception of their skills and so base their need for support on inaccurate perceptions, which would place Kruger and Dunning's respondents (above) at Howell's *unconscious incompetent* stage.

This has implications for the uptake of academic support as students who are at the *unconscious incompetent* stage may not accept support or, if they do, may not be able to identify the requisite support required or whether the support offered is appropriate.

2.2.2 The institutional location of English language support

English as a second language (ESL) teaching is often neither taught nor valued as an academic subject (Barkas, 2011:266), being regarded simply as support for other subjects, which impacts on the amount of resources it enjoys. Written English is seen as only a medium in which the subject specific knowledge is communicated, and as such, writing is viewed as a technical skill (Turner, 2011:31) with teachers and lecturers seeing language and knowledge as two different things (Zamel, 2004:6). However, writing is more than a technical skill because it allows us to present and analyse knowledge and 'is essential to the very existence of certain kinds of knowledge' (Rose, 1985:18). This suggests that the need for subject specialists to realise that language and subject content are not two separate things is at the heart of effective support for students (Love and Arkoudis, 2006:273). Often the hierarchical nature of colleges and universities, both in terms of departmental and course structures, does not support this idea with language courses taking place in

skills centres which have a “support” and not a “teaching” role (Barkas, 2011:265). Moreover, ESL classes are perceived as having ‘no authentic content’ (Zamel, 2004:11), and, although occasionally some do encourage creative writing, there is a concentration on de-contextualised grammar and structure (Connor, 1996:25-26).

2.2.3 Additional support versus differentiated support

The challenge for colleges is to ensure that all students are able to access appropriate education: it is not enough simply to give the students extra access to their lecturers. Support often involves L2, as well as L1 students with perceived deficiencies in their previous education or otherwise, being supported to access mainstream courses. To make up for these deficits, short-courses and workshops are often provided to help prepare the student for further study. For L2 students this support may take the form of general English classes, English for Academic Purposes (EAP) classes and study skills workshops (Peelo and Luxon, 2007:65).

I have argued above that L2 students face not only the challenge of a new academic subject (which may have subject specific educational expectations that are not explicitly outlined), but also studying in a language which is not their own. While Severiens and Wolff (2008:263) argue that L2 students are just as likely to employ effective study strategies as L1 students, these challenges mean that L2 students are likely to have to work harder and longer than they would have were they studying the same subject in their own

language and culture. When educational institutions expect students to also undertake EAP courses and study skills workshops, they are putting the student under an additional strain. Students may not have the time to attend these additional courses, especially when they are on a one-year course (Peelo and Luxon, 2007:66). It is therefore important that the support must be of value to the student (Norton, 2000:143) and, while general study skills courses can be useful, they will not cover the specific demands of some disciplines. For example, note-taking requires the ability to know what is important to the topic being studied, thus facilitating more informed questioning and information gathering (Peelo and Luxon, 2007:66).

Different academic disciplines often have different conventions and practices including technical or subject specific vocabulary (Hewings, et al., 2007:228). To be accepted as a functioning member of one of these discourse communities a student needs not only to be able understand and use the language, but also write in the correct genre (Hewings, et al., 2007:233). For students, using the correct convention in order to pass their course is a major priority (Lillis, 1997:183). A major disadvantage of general study skills courses is that the language and writing conventions of specific discourse communities are not usually taught and, even within academic departments, a notion that 'their' genre is the natural and commonsense approach to writing can lead to academics not making writing conventions explicit (Lillis, 1997:186). Research suggests that

individually tailored, targeted support dealing with the specifics of a particular subject's academic demands and conventions is more likely to be of value to the student (Norton, 1997:413). It has been argued that when student support is solely the responsibility of support services the student's experience of teaching and learning in the classroom is less likely to change (Tinto, 1997:599).

2.2.4 The nature of pastoral and general support

Colleges provide language and general support including pastoral care. Research in further education (Severiens and Wolff, 2008) indicates that when compared to L1 students, it is not just written English which causes L2 students to underperform, but that they generally underperform 'obtaining a lower number of credits even where their approaches to learning had been no different' (Severiens and Wolff, 2008:253). According to Tinto (1997:600), the emotional and social well-being of a student cannot be isolated from academic achievement. Students who are supported by their friends and family and have integrated well with their classmates are more likely to pass their course than students who have not. Conversely, students who have not integrated well are more likely to drop out than those who have (Tinto, 1997:600). Academic integration has two forms, formal academic integration, where the interaction between lecturer and student is based on study related matters and informal academic integration, where interactions are of a more personal nature, for example a lecturer may ask how the student is getting on at home

(Severiens and Wolff, 2008:254). In their study, Severiens and Wolff found that L2 students were no less academically integrated than the L1 students, however, student success cannot be predicted solely from measures of *formal* academic integration, nor is it just a matter of lecturer contact time. Those L2 students who had good informal academic integration and/or good social integration with peers performed better than those who did not. Lecturers may give struggling students more contact time than more able students, yet this investment of time does not always result in grades of the same standard as their classmates (Severiens and Wolff, 2008:261).

2.2.5 Summary of issues related to English as a second language support

Without a good diagnostic-tool lecturers and students must rely on their own judgement of language competence. This is difficult because of the different demands of everyday language and the demands of academic English. The same skills that are needed to be competent are required to judge competence therefore students often have unrealistic opinions of their abilities until their competence improves. This unrealistic judgement may result in language support being refused or inappropriate support accepted. Language support is often offered in learning centres and so is de-contextualised viewed by the institution as separate from the academic discipline. This support makes additional demands on the students' time and resources so they should be of value to the student but often they do

not cover the specific demands of the academic disciplines. However even where support is offered by subject specialist lecturers more access to those lecturers does not raise L2 grades to parity with L1 students as informal integration appears to be more important than formal integration.

2.3 Expectations about educational practices

2.3.1 College Knowledge

Bourdieu's (1986) concept of capital is a useful lens through which to examine the educational expectations of students and lecturers. Cultural capital takes the form of knowledge and skills which can confer advantages to those possessing them and disadvantage those without. The knowledge and skills which are valued vary within a community, its institutions and the time period. Thus the college at the centre of this research has its own expectations about cultural capital, which may not be aligned to those brought by L2 students, who consequently may be disadvantaged because they are unaware of, or do not possess, the knowledge and skills required for the college, given (as discussed in section 2.1.2) these are often not made explicit.

When people talk they quickly infer what each other means. To do this they draw not only on the language spoken but also their knowledge of context and what is appropriate in any given situation as well as wider knowledge of the world (Scollon, *et al.*, 2012:75).

One implication of this is that an L2 student not only needs to understand English and the rules of the classroom discourse but also what is *not* said because it may be assumed by others in the class that this knowledge is understood by all (Roberts, 2011:185).

This 'college knowledge' (Murphy & Fleming, 2000:82) and classroom discourse are products of culture and if a student is not familiar with the classroom culture then effective communication will be obstructed (Connor, 2011:71). For a student unfamiliar with the receiving culture, learning both the dominant classroom culture and the general knowledge of the receiving culture can lead to an additional stress. The stress of adjustment caused by not understanding both the local values and how to behave can cause anxiety, depression and anger (Wu & Hammond, 2011:425).

2.3.2 Teaching and learning styles

While there is some variety in teaching practices within a country there is more variety between countries (Santagata, 2004:142). As discussed above, students bring their own cultural/educational capital and may have different expectations of learning, teaching and communication styles (Roberts, 2011:193) which can lead to difficulties when these expectations are unfulfilled or are in conflict with each other (Peacock, 2001:1). Although it is impossible to find people who are 'typical' of a community and it cannot be assumed that the people of any given nation or ethnic group are homogenous (Gonzalez, 1997:317-325; Scollon, *et al.*, 2012:33), in East-Asian

education, students are often engaged in rote-learning and memorisation whereas, in the United Kingdom, students are encouraged to contribute their own ideas and to question and challenge the ideas of their lecturer and fellow students (Wu and Hammond, 2011:424) thus students from cultures where student contribution is not the norm may find this difficult to engage with.

2.3.3 Teacher attitudes

Although teachers' attitudes towards their students change as they get to know them, they still tend to expect the students to make all the changes to fit in while the educational establishment remains unchanged (Roberts, 2011:189). While students may have differing needs which cannot be fulfilled simultaneously (Scollon and Wong Scollon, 1995:9), and it is debatable whether it is possible for a teacher to fulfil all the needs within their classroom (Wu and Hammond, 2011:424), Shaughnessy (1976:238) argues that teachers must be prepared to change their own attitudes and practices and not simply expect the students to change. While she provides a compelling account of the changing attitudes of teachers as they get to know their students resonating with my own experience, more recent research suggests that changing teachers' attitudes may not be straightforward. In an article based on her doctoral study, Santagata (2004) reports that attempts to change teaching practices by requiring teachers to attend short staff development courses do not work, while they raise staff awareness

they do not change teaching practices or attitudes (Santagata, 2004:142). Hall (2005:404-405), in a survey of research conducted over a 30 year period argues that beliefs and practices are related and it is difficult to change long-held beliefs.

2.3.4 Summary of issues related to expectations about educational practices

'Cultural capital' is the knowledge and skills which are valued at a given point in an institution or community so therefore within the college there is 'college knowledge' which the L2 students may not be aware of. This can cause stress and may require the students to make adjustments to their behaviours and learning styles or be disadvantaged. Teaching and learning styles can vary between different countries and, while no individual can be held up as 'typical' of their ethnicity or nation, these differences may obstruct student engagement. Lecturers often expect L2 students to make all the adjustments and teaching practice is linked to long-held beliefs which can be difficult to change.

2.4 Relationships of students with peers and with staff

Sociocultural theory posits that relationships in education are of vital importance. According to Vygotsky (1978), students can be helped to extend their knowledge and understanding through their 'zone of proximal development', which is the difference between what a learner can achieve on their own and what the same learner can

achieve when supported through dialogue with lecturers and peers.

Thus students who cannot develop good relationships with their lecturers and peers will be disadvantaged and are more likely to withdraw from their course (Severiens & Wolff, 2008:254).

2.4.1 Relationships with peers

There is a long tradition of research which views education as a complex process in which collaborative learning helps the individual to develop and acquire new skills and knowledge (Vygotsky, 1978). It has been argued that relationships between L1 and L2 students are critically important for L2 students, both enhancing their English language skills (Norton, 2000:135) and developing a peer group support system (Wu & Hammond, 2011:434). Leki (2007:80) illustrates the importance of these relationships by describing how an L2 student supported herself by using fellow students and lecturers as resources, trialling different classmates in the role of note-taker until she decided who best suited her.

Despite the importance of these relationship research has shown that the ability of L2 students to gain access to L1 speakers is problematic, and L2 students often have to make the first contact as L1 students rarely do so (Wu and Hammond, 2011:425). The mere presence of L1 and L2 students in the same class does not guarantee meaningful contact between them (Leach, 2011:249) and a number of reasons have been suggested for this, such as poor L2 language competence, fear of causing offence or being accused of

racism and the lack of shared reference points (Harrison & Peacock, 2010:880). The failure to gain access to L1 students is a lost opportunity, resulting in L2 students often grouping together with their own or other L2 ethnic groups for social support (Harrison & Peacock, 2010:879; Wu & Hammond, 2011:432) or for academic support (Severiens & Wolff, 2008:254).

Outwith the classroom, it has been argued that one of the major reasons for lack of socialising between L1 and L2 students is the lack of a shared reference point (Harrison & Peacock, 2010:884). L1 students are not a homogeneous group and friendships tend to form on the basis of shared interests such as music or sport, and any lack of shared interest can hinder group inclusion. Research suggests that as L1 students' evening social activities frequently involved drinking alcohol, this excluded those who did not, with L1 students perceiving disapproval from their non-drinking L2 peers (Harrison & Peacock, 2010:884-885). To counter this and encourage participation between individuals of different ethnic origins Pritchard and Skinner (2002:326) paired students together and gave them social tasks to accomplish, for example making a meal together. Although drinking alcohol was mentioned as an issue, it was not insurmountable and the majority of students who took part in the study rated the experience positively and some made lasting friendships showing that the difficulties of establishing relationships between L1 and L2 students can be overcome.

Inside the classroom, it is argued that students, who are allowed to choose who they want to work with, tend to choose people they believe are like them, engendering greater predictability in how the group will behave and perform (Harrison & Peacock, 2010:880). Moreover, the choice of collaborative working could be influenced by the concomitant fear that working in a group with an L2 student will result in lower marks (Severiens & Wolff, 2008:254). Lack of familiarity with each other could lead different groups of students to view each other on the basis of stereotypes which do not change until they get to know each other through meaningful contact either by socialising or by working together. To achieve this in the classroom, teacher intervention is required to ensure that groups are mixed culturally, restricting student choice and making team-working compulsory (Harrison and Peacock, 2010:880). This is argued to be beneficial as multicultural group work may achieve higher results than monocultural group work, provided sufficient time is allowed to overcome the initial difficulties and become used to working together (Summers and Volet, 2008:358). To have meaningful contact, students from different cultures must meet in conditions which give them 'equality of status, existence of common goals and intimacy of interaction' (Leach, 2011:249) but this can be difficult to achieve because it partly depends on whether students consider themselves to be on the same social or educational level (Severiens & Wolff, 2008:254) in other words what 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1986) they each bring to the exchange.

2.4.2 Relationships with lecturers

The inclusion of students who do not speak English as their first language into an English speaking classroom can lead to strains not only for the student but also for the lecturers. Sachs (2001:153) claims the professional identity of lecturers comes from two sources. 'democratic professional identity' derives from their interactions with their students, their contribution to the educational institution and the community, as well as their professional training while 'managerial professional identity' derives from the retention and achievement rates of their students. With a greater emphasis on accountability in publicly funded institutions, lecturers are put under pressure to perform to targets showing that courses offer value for money to the taxpayer, often judged by achievement and retention rates (Sachs, 2001:153). Consequently, failing or struggling students can impact the managerial professional identity of the lecturer.

The perceptions of lecturers about their L2 students can affect the teaching delivered to the students: for example Zamel (2004:4) reports that lecturers can feel alienated in class. This may happen for example when students talk in their own language in the classroom, excluding the lecturer from the classroom discourse. Lecturers are often used to controlling the classroom dialogue (Edwards, 2012:240) and when students speak in a language that the lecturer does not understand, this may lead to a sense of loss of control or power, as the lecturer has no idea if the conversation is on topic or

whether the students are engaged in the class activity. Power is a collaborative process and both sides need to recognise the balance of power in any relationship (Norton, 1997:412). This has implications for the lecturers' ability to manage their classroom and a perceived loss of control may lead to feelings of inadequacy and loss of professionalism, potentially leading to the development of a hostile attitude towards the students. However, Shaughnessy (1976:234-238) suggests that many teachers are able to move from their initial fear and hostility to develop an understanding of their students as individuals as they get to know them.

2.4.3 Summary of issues related to relationships

Relationships are crucial for L2 students not only to give them a sense of belonging but to give them a network of support and facilitate enhanced learning opportunities. Despite this, L2 students find it difficult to form relationships with L1 students and often have to rely on fellow L2 students for friendship and support. Being in the same class does not mean that L1 and L2 students will have meaningful contact with each other, with working and social groups tending to form on the basis of like-minded students. Research suggests that where lecturers have taken steps to mix students, lasting friendships have been made. Having students speaking another language in a class can cause lecturers to feel a loss of both classroom dialogue and control and can affect their professional

status. These potentially can cause hostility towards L2 students, which dissipates as they get to know them.

2.5 Identity, Motivation and Investment

I did not set out to research identity, motivation and investment but these emerged as significant themes from the data analysis and they are clearly salient to the impact of language competence and support, educational expectations and relationships and the college experiences of the students and their lecturers. This prompted me to return to further reading of theory and research.

2.5.1 Identity

Norton uses the term 'identity' to refer to 'how people understand their relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how people understand their possibilities for the future' (Norton, 1997:410). A Social Constructionist view of society is that the importance given to, for example, common sense, knowledge and truth, is a social construction of the community of people who share ideas and values. Furthermore, the roles and identity assumed by members of society are also grounded in the politics of their community and not simply products of an individual desire to project a particular identity (Ivanic, 1997:12; Benwell & Stokoe, 2006:24).

People build and display identities to access, amongst others, life-styles, resources and power. To access them the identity needs both

to be credible and acceptable to, and capable of validation by, others as identity involves a collaborative relationship, thus, in order to work, the identity that we build for ourselves must be accepted by others (Le Roux, 2001:273). Individuals are positioned as similar or different to others and gain or lose credibility and reputations through these identities (Hyland, 2010:160). People are not at liberty simply to choose any identity as they are constrained in their choice by their communities who provide templates for possible options (Hyland and Tse, 2012:156). In order to assume an available identity a person joining a community must comply with its values and practices and engage in 'recognition work' (Gee, 2005:29) (either consciously or unconsciously) to show who they are and what they are doing. These identities are not however fixed and can be contested and changed (Ivanic, 1997:12).

The post-structuralist view is that personal identities are neither fixed nor singular, with individuals having multiple subject-positions that change both with time and experience (Norton Peirce, 1995:17-18; Morita, 2004:596; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004:16). Social identity relates to the relationship an individual has with society at large, and an individual may simultaneously have multiple identities such as, a student, worker, parent, or child, each affording access to different power levels which either enable or constrain the individual as they perform and move between them. The individual is not passive and, through the collaborative nature of identity formation, power is given,

shared or denied to individuals (Norton Peirce, 1995:12). Thus, while teachers can play a vital collaborative role in empowering students to form positive identities, this is not always the case, with formation resulting not from co-operation but from conflict and struggle (Morita, 2004:598). Identities can become fixed and unchanging in a person's mind (Le Roux, 2001:277) and resistance thereto can be difficult where the identities have been ascribed by a person who is in a position of power (Ivanic, 1997:13; Morita, 2004:598).

People, learning new roles, take on identities that they may initially be uncomfortable with, and while learning to fit the identity there is often the fear they may be exposed as a fraud (Lillis, 2001:84; Street, 2010:236). The learning process involves learning not only how to 'talk the talk' i.e. to sound like those who are already in the role, adopting and using specialist vocabulary and genres of speaking and writing, but also how to 'walk the walk' i.e. to look and to behave in the way that characterises the desired identity (Gee, 2005:21). As an individual learns how to fit a new identity within an established Community of Practice, they may be offered *legitimate peripheral participation* allowing them to participate (Lave & Wenger, 1991:29; Severiens & Wolff, 2008:254). In this way they are regarded as a legitimate member of the community but viewed as an 'apprentice' whose participation will grow with experience (Lave & Wenger, 1991:29; Morita, 2004:576). Miller (2004:291) uses the term 'audibility' to explain how an individual may gain acceptance within a

dominant group by sounding like that group, but gaining legitimate participation may also involve struggle and conflict (Morita, 2004:577). Unless both students and lecturers collude in the identities they build and project, classroom relationships will be at best unsatisfactory and at worst destructive (Norton, 2000:140): thus classroom discourse is not just a linguistic or education event but also a dynamic sociocultural event where identities are constantly being built, accepted and rejected.

2.5.2 Motivation, investment and opportunity cost

A lecturer may ascribe identities to the students which are not only based on academic output but also reflect the students' attitude, behaviour and engagement with the course. According to the concept of 'goal theory' developed in educational psychology (Grund and Fries, 2012:591), students are motivated by either 'performance approach' or 'performance avoidance', where individual performance is gauged *vis-a-vis* others, or by 'mastery goals' where improved competence is sought without reference to others. In this way motivation is seen as a personality trait rooted within the individual, subject to their own self-regulation.

In one of Cooke's (2006) case studies, an ESL teacher interprets a student's apparent lack of interest as being a consequence of their lifestyle; this would appear to suggest that the ESL teacher believed that the student's lifestyle was a source of motivational interference, impeding the student's study. Cooke, however, argues that the

lessons did not meet the needs of the student (Cooke, 2006:68).

Norton (2000:140) also reports students dropping out of classes because these did not contribute to their learning. She goes on to argue that 'motivation' is a psychologically individualistic term which ignores the social context in which the individual is situated and places the entire onus on the student. Norton (2000:10) suggests that the psychological term 'motivation', should be replaced by the sociological term 'investment'. A psychologically highly motivated student, therefore, may withdraw from of a course because they have little investment in it. The term 'investment' acknowledges the social context of the student engagement and is dependent upon whether the educational opportunity offered to them is worth 'investing' in terms of their interests and desires. Students not only invest their resources of money, time, effort and energy into the target language or other educational opportunity but, in doing so, indirectly invest in themselves to improve or enhance their present and future identities. Norton further argues that if the desired identity of the student is not acknowledged in the classroom the student will become disengaged (Norton, 1997:413).

The use of the metaphor of investment as opposed to motivation is apposite, because education is perceived as a worthwhile investment in the future, not only generating added value but also enhancing a student's identity. However, given that the value of investments fluctuates through time, I would argue the same applies to the value

of education in relation to other opportunities, both at the time the investment is made and in the future. I would suggest that Norton's investment theory can be further developed by adding the concept of 'opportunity cost'. In economics an opportunity cost (Buchanan, 2008) arises because investment resources are limited. If someone invests one hundred pounds in a savings account they cannot invest the same sum in something else. Choices between investments have to be made: the loss of the potential gain that could have been derived from the choice not taken up is the opportunity cost. Put another way, if a student invests ten hours in studying they cannot invest the same time in working or being with their family and the loss in terms of, for example, family cohesion, income or a general sense of well-being is the opportunity cost. Grund and Fries (2012:590) employed this concept within an educational psychology model, arguing that 'motivational interference' can be caused by the opportunity costs of an alternative activity, thus appearing to assume a narrow view of the young, single student who is juggling learning activities against leisure activities, and arguing that when a student engages in the latter rather than the former there has been a break down in self-regulation. However, I wanted to use the concept of opportunity cost within a sociocultural framework and, rather than viewing students monolithically, I concur with Norton's argument that people adopt multiple subject-positions and these multiplicities are a site of conflict as the needs of various subject-positions *may* be in direct conflict with each other. For instance, in section 5.1 Bijon is

shown to weigh up the opportunity costs of work, rest and study in the course of making decisions about what will benefit him most. As human agency is involved in these conflicts, the decisions taken may not always be the wisest or most logical (Norton Peirce, 1995:15). Implicit in Grund and Fries's (2012) argument is that educational opportunities are always valuable, whereas I argue that this is not always the case, as is demonstrated by the case studies of Katarzyna and Amy (see sections 5.2 and 5.4 respectively) who did not value the offered grammar lessons and therefore did not engage with them. Adding 'opportunity cost' to the concept of investment means that student engagement is not only determined by the possible value of future returns but is also influenced by the opportunity costs at the time the investment is made. This accounts for fluctuating levels of student engagement in a way that Grund and Fries's (2012) use of opportunity cost cannot. As the value of education is not fixed but fluctuates in relation to the value of other opportunities, so the desire to invest similarly fluctuates. The need for education may have to compete with the need to earn money, a person's identity as a student may have to compete with their identity as a family member, and at different times these different needs and identities will assume greater or lesser importance/value relative to each other. While Grund and Fries (2012:594) perceive opportunity costs as being a negative influence on motivational self-regulation, involving a loss of opportunity, I would argue that from the student's point of view the effects may be positive as students can and do

make good investment decisions. For example, where an L2 student recognises the need for peer support and has the opportunity to socialise with L1 students as opposed to studying independently, the L2 student will gain from social integration which can positively impact academic study.

2.5.3 The 'Ideal Student'

Some identities can be viewed positively or negatively by third parties. Someone who embodies the skills and attributes that teaching professionals believe (either consciously or unconsciously) are required to perform well and fulfil their academic potential may be described by their teachers as an 'ideal student' (Harkness, *et al.*, 2007:124). The skills and aptitudes required of the ideal student vary from culture to culture and are influenced by the needs of the society that the student is being prepared for. Where, as happened in Eastern Europe in the late twentieth century, the society changes, then the concept of what a student needs to perform well also changes (Harkness, *et al.*, 2007:123). Writing about the beliefs of school teachers teaching children, Harkness *et al.* found different characteristics across the five western cultures studied, though they did not consider how students learn from their teachers what behaviour, skills and attributes to aspire to. Teaching professionals are themselves the product of an education system which incorporates a concept of an ideal student but even within the same culture these concepts can change through time. Thus even where a

lecturer and a group of adult students are of the same culture, the concept of the ideal student may not be the same therein. This may be amplified when students of different ethnic groups are present.

2.5.4 Summary of issues related to Identity

Identity is a term used to describe the way people view themselves and others in relationship to communities across time. Identities allow access to relationships, resources and power but must be accepted by others as valid so are often contested and changed. Identity is neither fixed nor singular and people have multiple subject-positions which can exist simultaneously giving a person access to varying degrees of resources and power. As people assume new identities/subject-positions they may fear that they will be found to be inadequate, though they may also be offered legitimate peripheral participation where others in the Community of Practice accept that they are in a learning process. However, the right to participate may have to be gained through conflict. The multiple subject-positions of an individual can be in conflict and this can lead students to be labelled as unmotivated. Norton, however, argues that 'motivation' is a psychological term which has the attributes of a fixed personality trait. Instead she argues that students' relationship to education is better described in terms of 'investment'. This explains why students can be uninterested in some educational opportunities: because their needs are not met. I have argued that extending this economic metaphor to include 'opportunity costs' helps to explain students'

fluctuating investment in educational opportunities. The conflict between multiple subject-positions means that to invest in one subject position incurs an opportunity cost for another.

Simultaneously the concept of the 'ideal student' represents the skills/aptitudes that teachers believe students need to be successful in their course. These attributes can change across societies and time but can form the basis of an ascribed identity which students can find very difficult to resist.

2.6 Conclusion

Language competence is important for L2 students not only for academic success but also to integrate socially with those they meet. The traditional markers of language competence, the ability to function linguistically on a day-to-day basis and satisfactorily perform grammar exercises, are not always good indicators of academic English competence and L2 students and their lecturers find it difficult to assess language competence for study within particular disciplines. Lecturers see lack of language competence as a barrier to academic success but tend to view this as a temporary problem with the solution resting with the student and support staff. However, language support often consists of de-contextualised grammar lessons which do not relate to the students' academic discipline.

Speakers of different language varieties use English in different ways and this can be a source of misunderstanding and confusion which can lead to difficulties forming relationships with other

students. It is not sufficient for students to be in the same class to have meaningful interaction. L2 students can find it difficult to form relationships with L1 students and either form relationships with students of their own nationality/ethnic group or with other L2 students thus relinquishing the opportunity to practise English with an L1 speaker and develop peer support with them.

L2 students not only have to learn a new academic subject but also have to learn the academic discourse and educational expectations that the subject encompasses. Different academic discourse communities have different expectations for written work some of which, where they are implicit in nature, may be a source of confusion to L2 students. By not making their expectations explicit, institutions behave as if their discourse is the only legitimate discourse as opposed to being one of a variety of discourses which can be appropriate in different contexts, leading to students being judged as deficient, and as such, undeserving of academic support.

As students struggle to find a voice in the classroom they need to be offered legitimate peripheral participation in order to be able to become a contributing member of the classroom community. As they invest in education students' develop new identities but it is important that the lectures and other staff acknowledge the students' identity to avoid disengagement. The subject-position of a student has to compete with other subject-positions both for time and investment

hence the concept of opportunity cost is a useful way to explain the fluctuating engagement of students in their education.

Chapter 3: Methodology and research methods

With some exceptions, most research starts with conceptualising either the major issue or the main area of interest, which in turn informs the research design (Punch, 2005:38). In this research, I have made assumptions about the expected findings and how best to investigate and validate them. I have assumed that it is more difficult to study any academic subject in a second language. This is premised upon my experience of teaching at the further education college, where some of the difficulties faced by L2 students affected their academic performance, resulting in either the attainment of lower grades than they were probably capable of, or failing to progress to higher-level courses. I do not subscribe to the 'myth of transience' (Rose, 1985:27) having observed that the difficulties faced were not transient in nature, did not disappear on their own over time and that action was required by the college, staff and the students to discover and overcome them. Furthermore, I do not subscribe to the 'Technicist' model of language, (Turner, 2011:31) where language is seen purely as a technical skill which can be improved with remedial support. Rather I have argued that it is a sociocultural phenomenon (see sections 2.1 and 2.4).

Initially, a key research interest area was the experience of the student respondents, however it quickly became apparent that their accounts only told part of the story and that the experiences and perspectives of the lecturers were also important within the overall

sociocultural context and played an important role in students' learning (see sections 2.1 and 2.4). Research design and methodology is of strategic importance to the validity of any research but it also facilitates and constrains what data can be collected. This project, using the sociocultural approach which frames it, was thus designed to collect data which would give voice to the respondents' experiences in order to address specific research questions which are:

1. What kind of challenges do students with English as a second language experience in relation to:
 - a. Issues of language competence.
 - b. English as a second language support.
 - c. Expectations about educational practices.
 - d. Relationships with staff and students.
2. How do these challenges impact on the college experiences of the students and their lecturers?

This chapter will explain and justify the methods of data collection and analysis before examining the ethical considerations this research highlighted.

3.1 Research design

Research in social sciences can be broadly classified as involving three strategic approaches: exploratory, descriptive and explanatory, which have often been viewed as hierarchical in nature, with an

exploration leading to a description, and then to an explanation (Yin, 2009:7-8). Although the distinction between these strategies is not always clear, they are seen as leading naturally to different types of research methods, and Yin argues that the case study can and does fulfil the needs of all three research strategies, describing it as: 'an empirical inquiry that [(a)] investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when [(b)] the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident' (Yin, 2009:18).

Five component of case study research design are identified by Yin as follows:

- A study's questions
- Its propositions, if any
- Its unit(s) of analysis
- The logic linking the data to the propositions
- The criteria for interpreting the findings.'

(Yin, 2009:27)

Both research questions and the propositions (or hypothesis) help the researcher develop the strategy for the research, such as pointing to information sources i.e. a literature search, which in turn assists the formulation of, for example interview questions or the type of data that is required to be gathered.

3.1.1 Case study versus action research

Whereas an action researcher wants to take action and thereafter study the consequences, the case study researcher does not have this opportunity or desire. An action-research based project, though considered, was discarded due to the impossibility of instigating or implementing the necessary institutional changes required for such a project to be meaningful within the time available. The implementation of change would have been difficult in any case for me to achieve given my level of power within the research context (Yin, 2009:2). The case study approach, on the other hand, documents an existing situation or case rather than seeking to change it. I was addressing the kind of real life exploratory 'how' and 'why' type questions which Yin suggests are particularly amenable to a case study approach (Yin, 2009:9). In addition, a case study can utilise a holistic investigative approach using mixed research methods such as combining interviews with observation and statistical information, and I found this an effective way of pursuing my research questions, as I explain below.

Yin acknowledges that case study methodology has sometimes been viewed as a weak form of research where there is 'insufficient rigor' (Yin, 2009:14). One problem associated with the case study approach is the difficulty of duplicating the research and of generalising from it (Gagnon, 2010:11). Section 2.3.1 commented on the difficulties of claiming any given person is typical of their national

or ethnic grouping and it must be acknowledged that in any case study while some people may behave in a certain way or express an opinion, that does not mean this behaviour or opinion can be generalised. The case study method can however produce a rich, in-depth description and analysis of a context with consideration paid not only to what is happening at that moment, but also to the historical context from which the case arises (Gagnon, 2010:12; Cohen, *et al.*, 2011:289).

'A case study provides a unique example of real people in real situations...' (Cohen, *et al.*, 2011:289) and was therefore an appropriate methodology for this research which examines contemporary issues impacting on the college, staff and students. Using a sociocultural approach, (see sections 2 and 2.1), the context of the students' experience and perceptions was of vital importance because the context is where experiences are shaped, occur and are interpreted by the respondents, forming their perceptions. The research examined the real life experiences of individuals within the college and the policy and procedures that impact on these individuals. Although every individual experiences a situation in a different way it is by combining their experiences, building a mosaic of experiences as it were, that a picture of a larger 'college experience' becomes apparent.

In deciding on the boundaries for a case study, it is not always clear where the experience of an individual or a group of individuals should

begin and end (Stake, 2005:444). For instance, life beyond the college can impact on study experiences and vice-versa. Care however must be taken neither to affect the validity of the research by arbitrarily imposing too narrow boundaries, nor expanding the research ranges and boundaries too widely, thus making it difficult to manage and control. To avoid this, my research focussed on the individuals in the case study rather than the whole college, giving voice to those who were 'acted upon', in other words the students and lecturers, as opposed to the 'powerful actors' (Goodson & Sikes, 2001:8) such as governmental or collegiate policymakers.

3.1.2 Case study versus ethnography

Hammersley and Atkinson (1995:1) define ethnography as a form of social research which often concentrates on researching small scale social-groups in the real-world contexts. The empirical data is gathered through unstructured methods including participant-observations. The analysis of the data takes a descriptive form rather than a statistical form and the analysis explores the differences between the participants' perspective and the researcher observations (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995:4-6). Although Yin (2009:15) argues that case studies may not necessarily take an ethnographic approach, Hammersley and Atkinson's account of ethnography is close to the case study approach I adopted. They argue that ethnography is a naturalist form of research where the researcher is involved, either subtly or explicitly, with the subjects on

a day-to-day basis over an extended period of time, gathering information by observing, listening and asking questions of the subjects and describing the context in which these take place (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995:8). Thus, for example, Wallace et al. (1998:76) conducted an ethnographic-study of students over four years. In my own case the constraints of researching part time in a context where I worked full time meant that it was not possible to have daily contact with the respondents: thus for example, classroom observations of the lecturer/student interaction which could have been valuable were precluded by my own work commitments and it was not therefore possible to take a fully ethnographic approach. However, my research is ethnographically informed as it gathers empirical material from a small scale group in a real life context using a range of methods including semi-structured interviews, observation and examination of documents. The analysis was mainly qualitative in nature and aimed to understand the participants' perspectives and experiences to which I brought my own (emic) understanding as an insider of the college. At the same time, I brought an outsider researcher perspective (i.e. etic understanding) from my understanding of the theory and research discussed in section 2.

3.1.3 Insider versus Outsider

Hellawell (2006:484-5) defines an 'insider' as someone who has a *priori* knowledge of a community, although they do not have to be a member of the community, and an 'outsider' as someone who does

not have *a priori* knowledge of the community. He argues that the researcher should be both insider and outsider (2006:487) and he goes on to suggest that a researcher 'can slide along more than one insider-outsider continuum' (Hellowell, 2006:489). While researching in the college I was both an insider and an outsider depending on the person and/or the situation I was dealing with at that moment in time. As a member of staff I may have been viewed by the students as an insider of the college but also as an outsider to them because I am a native English speaker living in my native country. When interviewing lecturers I may have been viewed as an outsider, someone who did not understand the issues that they faced on a day-to-day basis because I was not a subject lecturer. They may even have viewed me with suspicion, someone who was looking at them with critical eyes and who could act as an agent for change. Collectively the respondents may have been reluctant to reveal some of their opinions (Goodson & Sikes, 2001:103). Students may have been reluctant to criticise the college and staff, whilst staff members may not have wanted to be seen to be critical of the college.

3.2 Validity

To be considered valid, the research methodology and design employed must be transparent and the analysis and the decisions made by the researcher justified. As I have explained, case study research can provide the opportunity to examine the experiences of real people in real situations (Burgess, *et al.*, 2006:59) although there

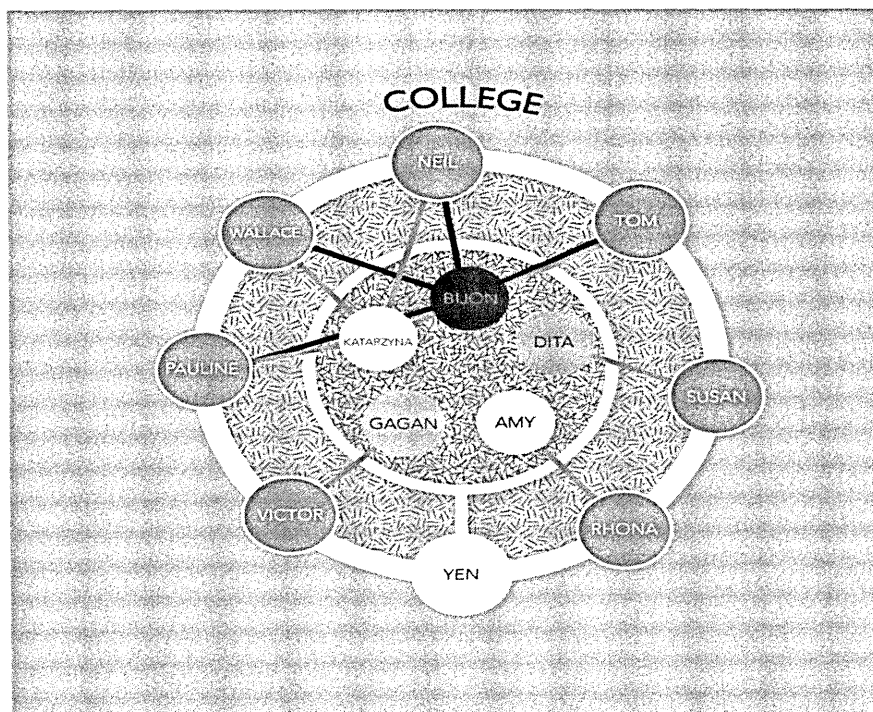
are difficulties with generalisation, duplication to a wider context, and boundary issues. Yin argues that these difficulties are due in the main to researchers in the past being less rigorous than they should have been and that tests of validity should be built into any case study (Yin, 2009:14).

3.2.1 Construct Validity

Firstly, the validity of a project will be affected by the quality of the research design, the construct validity (Yin, 2009:41). As discussed in section 3.1.1, the boundaries of the study should be considered carefully. Stake (2005:455) observes that the case study should be 'embraceable' by the researcher because, if it becomes too big, the researcher will not be able to comprehend it fully and may accept simplistic explanations of the data. To avoid taking a simplistic view of the data Yin recommends three different tactics to ensure that the construct validity of the research is not compromised. Firstly he recommends that different sources of evidence are used in order to develop 'converging lines of enquiry' (Yin, 2009:114-115). My own research drew on different types of data including policy documents, learner centre observations, student performance statistics and student and lecturer interview data. Secondly, chains of evidence should be established: as illustrated in Figure 1 below my research students were asked about their experiences of their course and their responses were compared with the responses of the lecturers to questions about the students' performance and behaviour. In turn,

lecturers' opinions about the students' performance were linked to statistical information about how the student performed relative to others on their course. Finally, Yin suggests that the key informants should review the draft research report (Yin, 2009:42) which not only satisfies the ethical consideration of the respondents' right of reply, but also allows the researcher to check their understanding and analysis of the data. Unfortunately this proved to be impossible as not only did students and staff leave the college without forwarding addresses but I also changed employment before the analysis was finished.

Figure 1: Tutor-student relationships within the case studies



3.2.2 Internal validity

The second test is that of internal validity which Yin (2009:42) argues is mainly of concern to exploratory case studies where the relationships between events are investigated, where for example, it is assumed that event X has an impact on event Y resulting in an outcome Z. Threats to this type of validity occur where there is incomplete knowledge of the situation under investigation, such as in an investigation of the relationship between two events which ignores a third event also impacting on the relationship. The internal validity of a research project can also be compromised if the researcher is not rigorous in examining and explaining the reasons for their actions and inferences (Yin, 2009:43). Another threat to internal validity is where something that was not observed is inferred. This may occur, for example, where the researcher has failed to 'make the familiar strange', and assumed knowledge of the reason why something has occurred, because of familiarity with the situation (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995:207). In other words, to secure internal validity, the researcher must ensure that the inference is correct: that all inferences and analysis are reasonable, logical and supportable, as well as justified by theory. Yin (2009:43) calls the processes whereby the researcher ensures their arguments are justified, and where rival and alternative explanations to the one espoused are considered, 'logic models'. The sociocultural approach taken by this research recognises that the context under investigation is complex and multi-

layered. Causal claims are justified through drawing additionally on the findings of other researchers. For instance this research draws on the identity and investment theories of Norton (Norton Peirce, 1995; Norton, 1997; 2000; Norton & Toohey, 2011) and other theorists (Morita, 2004; Gee, 2005; Benwell & Stokoe, 2006) to justify the findings made. By using the theories of others to support my findings I am better able to claim that the findings of this research are reasonable, justifiable and valid.

3.2.3 External Validity

Problems of generalisation have been a source of criticism of the case study approach, and as discussed above in section 2.2, no student is ever 'typical' of any particular ethnic origin or indeed social class or age group. Case studies are difficult to replicate because of the complex individual, social and contextual factors in any situation and do not stand up to the external validity tests that can be applied to other research methods which may employ experimentation. Yin (2009:43-44) argues that not all case studies need nor indeed are capable of generalisation and Stake (2005:448) cautions that the drive to generalise can lead some researchers to be distracted from important areas of the individual case.

In some ways my research features '*Intrinsic case studies*' (Stake, 2005:445). These are unique situations worth studying for their own sake. In this thesis I build a detailed or 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973:10; Ponterotto, 2006:538) of the case study's issues and

circumstances. My research took place at a particular time in the history of the college: a time of great change. These particular circumstances are unlikely to occur again, but at the same time many aspects of the college are similar to many other Scottish colleges in terms of funding, courses and quality systems as well as political and economic pressures. Despite variations in courses offered and management structures all colleges have to comply with laws which exist to ensure equality and equal opportunities, including the provision of some form of support to those who need it. Furthermore, FE colleges in Scotland are funded in the same way, ultimately by the Scottish Government through the Scottish Funding Council. With the funding come expectations about how that money will be spent and this in itself sets similar constraints throughout the colleges. Equally all Scottish colleges provide qualifications through the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) so, although there may be variations in the subjects taught, the methods used to teach them, standards and quality systems are homogenous throughout the sector.

My research is therefore also in some senses an instrumental case study (Stake, 2005:445), where investigation provides an insight into a particular situation with the expectation that it will be amenable to generalisation. The case being studied does not need to be seen as typical but will have been chosen because it illustrates particular issues (Yin, 2009:37). Where single case studies are most

appropriate for the unique situations of some intrinsic case studies multiple case studies can compare a number of cases embedded within the same context. Multiple rather than single case studies can also be considered to be more resilient simply because where evidence comes from multiple case studies, as in this research, weight is added to the findings (Yin, 2009:61).

Stake recognises that some case studies have both intrinsic and instrumental elements being both interesting in their own right and capable of being generalised (Stake, 2005:447). This was the case for this research which takes the form of a multiple case study with the individual experiences of five students and their lecturers embedded within the context of the college which, as argued above, has elements which may be of interest to other educational institutions but also elements which are unlikely to be able to be reproduced.

3.2.4 Reliability

The final test is that of reliability. Research is usually regarded as reliable if the results can be replicated by following the same methods on a different occasion. While this is desirable for experimental studies, a case study produces analytical generalisations not statistical ones (Yin, 2009:38). Even where the procedures used in any particular case study are carefully documented, this type of validation is difficult because replication of interview data is impossible. Time changes peoples' perceptions of

any given topic or situation and it cannot be guaranteed that respondents would give the same replies to the same questions under different circumstances. The production of an insightful example as opposed to replication is the goal of case study methodology. While duplication of respondent data is difficult for case studies, duplication of analytic methods is feasible: a research study should therefore be considered reliable if, given the same data set, the analysis and findings of the research are capable of replication. The reliability rests with the analysis of the data.

3.2.5 Units of analysis

The unit of analysis needs to be defined carefully as this is both the key area of interest in the case study (Cohen, et al., 2011:294) and 'a real life phenomenon' (Yin, 2009:32). Because I am taking a sociocultural approach I have taken account of: the ways in which students are influenced, constrained and empowered both by curriculum and pedagogic organisation in the college at a particular historical moment, and also by key relationships in classroom with lecturers and peers. The lecturers exert considerable power over students' experience and so their beliefs and perceptions about students are significant. Students' educational experience is multifaceted and because students and lecturers referred to factors outside college these have been included where raised by interviewees.

The case study units of analysis are therefore the five selected students' experiences (see below), including how these are shaped by relationships with staff and fellow students, lecturers' perceptions and factors outside college seen as salient by interviewees.

3.3 Data Collection

Research methods were generally qualitative, but a small amount of quantitative data was collected which related to the number of L2 students enrolled at the college, and provided performance and attendance figures for the case study students in relation to their classmates (Appendix D). To access a wider range of respondents a questionnaire could have been useful but this would have limited respondents' responses. This method was trialled in the pilot study when a questionnaire was sent to thirty-six lecturers but, as only two were returned, I did not pursue this method in the main research instead using semi-structured interviews (Appendix E). Classroom observation, as discussed in section 3.1.2, was not possible but observations were made of the students in the learning centre as they worked either individually or with staff (Appendix F). Documents produced by the college (Appendix G), such as the International Student Guide, which was part of the promotional material sent to encourage potential students to consider studying with the college, as well as assessment and disciplinary policies were also collected.

3.3.1 Selection of research participants

Because of limitations under the Data Protection Act (see section 3.5.1 below), I relied on approaching students who used the learning centre where I worked. Thus students who were being supported were approached, rather than students who either did not feel they needed support or that the support existed. I approached respondents of mixed of age and gender, with students from the Middle and the Far East being selected in addition to the European students who formed the bulk of the L2 student group. The students were enrolled on a range of courses from access level to HNC. Initially five students agreed to be interviewed, three female and two male, who were all interviewed twice. Later, as the research progressed, another three (two males and one female) agreed to take part and were interviewed once though because of this they are not included in the thesis. Once the students had agreed to participate, their lecturers were then approached to contribute to the research. Eight members of college staff and eight students were interviewed using semi-structured interviews.

The demographic information of the respondents is presented below in Table 2 (students) and Table 3 (staff). All names are pseudonyms.

| Student | Subject | Age | Gender | Nationality | Lectured by |
|-----------|-------------------|-----|--------|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Bijon | Accounting | 28 | Male | Iranian | Neil Pauline Tom Wallace |
| Katarzyna | Accounting | 52 | Female | Polish | Neil Pauline Tom Wallace |
| Amy | Child Care | 18 | Female | Hong Kong Chinese | Rhona |
| Dita | Child Care | 52 | Female | Polish | Susan |
| Gagan | Art and Design | 45+ | Male | Nepalese | Victor |

Table 2: Student Details

| Lecturer | Role | Age | Gender | Nationality | Years in role | Lecturer to |
|----------|---|-----|--------|-------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Neil | Accounting Lecturer | 45+ | Male | Scottish | 25 | Bijon Katarzyna |
| Pauline | Business Lecturer | 45+ | Female | Scottish | 14 | Bijon Katarzyna |
| Rhona | Care Lecturer | 45+ | Female | Scottish | 2 + 20 as a Primary Teacher | Amy |
| Susan | Care Lecturer | 45+ | Female | Scottish | 15 | Dita |
| Tom | Accounting Lecturer | 45+ | Male | Scottish | 0.15 | Bijon Katarzyna |
| Victor | Art Lecturer | 45+ | Male | English | 10 | Gagan |
| Wallace | Law Lecturer | 45+ | Male | Scottish | 26 | Bijon Katarzyna |
| Yen | International Development Officer | 28 | Female | Chinese | 1 | |

Table 3: Staff Details

With hindsight, approaching the departments to identify potential subjects could have given a broader range, however, studying the students who had been identified (by either themselves or lecturers) as requiring support was valuable, as it is often when there are difficulties that we can see how things work. In addition, had the departments introduced the students to the research, then they might

have felt pressured or obliged to co-operate with the research because the lecturers graded their work.

3.3.2 Interviews

Interviews with students and lecturers provided the bulk of my data. I used semi-structured interviews which allowed some standardisation of the questions but gave the respondents more opportunity to talk about what was important to them and I was able to ask follow up questions in response to that information.

Structured-interviews would have been too restrictive, limiting the respondents to answering the question directly and preventing them from making connections between different aspects of their sociocultural experience. This in turn would have prevented me accessing additional information which respondents provided within the more open format I employed. When interviewing L2 speakers, I often had to rephrase questions to aid their understanding, which would have been precluded if standardised questions had been used. To help themselves understand, a respondent who is actively making sense of a question will take notice of not only its wording, but the researcher's body language, facial expressions, tone of voice and the physical surrounding in which the interview takes place (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009:93). This might suggest that the interviewer must constantly monitor all these things to minimise variation as much as possible but, if one considers language events to be a social practice, then intuitively it follows that some variation,

however minimal, within semi-structured interview will occur. All interviews took place in the same room, under similar physical conditions, and covered the same list of trigger questions, but each interview was also a unique interaction between the interviewee and interviewer.

Using unstructured-questions, where the interviewer does not have specific information to elicit, allowing the respondent instead to talk in-depth about a given subject, were also deemed inappropriate.

While this is a common tool for life history researchers (Goodson & Sikes, 2001:28) the need to keep the case study within a manageable limit meant that the research could not encompass all the students' life histories, and of course the range and volume of data gathered by this method would be too large to be analysed effectively in relation to my research questions.

None of the students were as forthcoming as I had hoped and while interviews of approximately one hour had been planned, the answers offered by the students were often short and some interviews were therefore substantially shorter than planned. There are a number of reasons why this may have happened. In one particular case, Amy, did not give any more than the barest of responses to my questions. Before the research was undertaken she told me that she did not like talking (even in her own language) and her reticence may also have been affected by her limited communication abilities in English, which

were reported to be mirrored in her oral responses in class (see section 5.4.2).

The tables below outline the interview timings and schedules for the students and lecturers (See Appendix H for complete respondents' tables). The students were mostly interviewed once at the beginning of their course and one at the end. The lecturers were interviewed just before the end of the last semester.

| Pseudonym | No of interviews | Interview dates | Length of interview |
|-----------|------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Bijon | 2 | Oct-07 | 00:07:38 |
| | | Jan-09 | 00:12:11 |
| Katarzyna | 2 | Oct-08 | 00:10:52 |
| | | May-09 | 00:18:36 |
| Amy | 3 | Apr-09 | 00:08:27 |
| | | Apr-10 | 00:08:29 |
| | | May-10 | 00:07:51 |
| Dita | 2 | Oct-08 | 00:11:29 |
| | | Jan-09 | 00:10:22 |
| Gagan | 2 | Jan-09 | 00:14:29 |
| | | May-09 | 00:13:53 |

Table 4: Student Interviews

| Pseudonym | No of interviews | Interview dates | Length of interview |
|-----------|------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Neil | 1 | May-09 | 01:04:16 |
| Pauline | 2 | May-09 | 00:32:33 |
| | | Sep-11 | 00:23:22 |
| Rhona | 1 | Apr-09 | 00:34:23 |
| Susan | 1 | May-09 | 00:36:23 |
| Tom | 1 | May-09 | 00:45:06 |
| Victor | 1 | Apr-09 | 00:32:51 |
| Wallace | 1 | Jun-09 | 00:49:31 |
| Yen | 1 | Sep-11 | 00:53:29 |

Table 5: Staff Interviews

3.3.3 Learning centre observations

The ILC was a learning centre with 36 computers: students could make an appointment to see a member of staff or drop-in and work on their own. Because the centre was used by many students at the same time the observations were not recorded and handwritten notes were made. The observational focus was the interaction of the L2 students with the ILC staff, the nature of the support requested and delivered. Attendance in the ILC was not compulsory and the sessions had no set time so are of a variable length (see Appendix F an example of observation data).

3.4 Data analysis

According to Guest, '...good data analysiscombines appropriate elements and techniques from across traditions and epistemological perspectives...' (Guest, et al., 2012:3). In my research, I have combined Thematic Analysis and Discourse Analysis to analyse the data generated. This section will briefly discuss the recording and transcription process before discussing Thematic Analysis and Discourse Analysis and justifying their combination.

3.4.1 Recording and Transcription

Recording interviews allows them to be listened to and analysed repeatedly (Wooffitt, 2001:50), while allowing transcription and the production of verbatim quotations. Recording also reduces the workload during the interview (obviating extensive notation) allowing

the researcher to focus on the respondent. Video recording was not used because it would have identified the respondents and would have increased the amount of transcribing beyond what was practical. As Ochs (1979:44) writes, 'A transcription that is too detailed is difficult to follow and assess'. While Ochs argues for simplicity, no part of the interaction should be ignored. People talking make false-starts and frequently intersperse their utterances with 'fillers' such as 'ahh' and 'emm' (Wooffitt, 2001:61). In this study, while false-starts were included, fillers and the lengths of pauses were not. As some of the respondents were not fluent English speakers, fillers and pauses may be indicative of nothing more than a search for the appropriate words. The words that were said have been transcribed, as also any strong emotions which were displayed e.g. laughing or crying. Examples of the transcriptions used can be viewed in Appendix I.

While the recording of an interview allows the researcher to listen to the recording more than once it does not remove the burden of interpretation but rather delays it until the transcription is made (Ochs, 1979:44). This can have disadvantages, especially if time has elapsed between the interview and the transcription process, as it can be difficult even with the aid of notes to remember each interview in detail. For this reason the norm was to transcribe each interview prior to conducting the next one. However this was not always practical. There were occasions where there were delays but, while

this may have sometimes limited the exploration of themes raised in interviews with the corresponding lecturer/student, it did not hamper the progress of the research.

Ochs (1979:45) argues that, when transcribing interviews, choices are made about how to lay out the transcription, and that these choices reflect the power relations and the culture within the interview process. Swann (2010:163) argues further that the layout will also be determined by the interests of the researcher. The digital recordings of the interviews I carried out were transcribed using a standard turn taking layout of one speaker following another (Swann, 2010:163). Since only two people, the interviewer and respondent, took part, this allowed the relationships between utterances in the transcripts to be shown in a conventional top to bottom sequence. Overlaps were shown by positioning the words of the person interrupting directly under the words of the person who was being interrupted. The students being interviewed did not necessarily speak English fluently and used irregular pronunciation however standard spelling (without adding anything to the data) was imposed in order to make the transcripts readable. Likewise where some lecturers spoke in a Scottish dialect, this was written in Standard English orthography, to avoid drawing attention to the dialect, which could have made the transcripts difficult to read. In contrast the decision was taken not to correct non-standard grammar because this would unintentionally change the meaning of both utterances and

what was said. Changing the grammatical expression of the students' ideas would have imposed a level of interpretation on the transcription which I wanted to avoid, neither wanting to be premature in my analysis nor prejudicing any other analyst who might work with the data.

3.4.2 Thematic Analysis

Thematic Analysis examines research data for themes, being:

- (a) structural themes, which are imposed on the data by the research design, ie the research questions and instruments
- (b) emergent themes, which are observed in the course of data-analysis in the context of the research design (Guest, *et al.*, 2012:50).

This research featured both types of themes (see Table 6 below).

The research questions informed interview questions, which in turn established structural themes. Emergent themes may be signalled by a particular key word as well as coming from underlying semantics.

As these can be implicit, the analyst, whether using a piece of software (such as NVivo) or not, must keep an open mind when analysing the data, as themes may not necessarily be self-evident and may not emerge on their own or through an electronic search.

To recognise emergent themes the data must first be coded and this involves the development of a code book (see Appendix J) which

gives the coder guidance as to when the code can be applied. Code book development is a key step in the analysis as it is developed by coders to guide their thoughts on the data they are analysing, which change and develop as codes are formed, defined and occasionally discarded (Guest, *et al.*, 2012:52). It is recommended to aid the validity of the coding process that multiple coders work on the same piece of data and then compare results (Guest, *et al.*, 2012:89). Here as there was only one coder, to achieve consistency of coding, each piece of data was coded twice with a time gap between each coding as suggested by Guest *et al.* (2012:92).

To aid coding, the transcribed data was entered into QRS NVivo, thereby allowing data extracts to be coded to multiple codes, which otherwise can be difficult to illustrate particularly where manual coding with highlighters is used. However, QRS NVivo is simply a piece of software and does not suggest codes, which must come from the researcher (Gillham, 2005:126; Yin, 2009:128). Thematic analysis involved the initial structural themes being reviewed, refined and divided to become more definitive and facilitate the addition of new emergent themes. Following the strategy recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006:97) Data extracts were coded and re-coded until I was satisfied they were coded to the appropriate theme. Table 6, below, lists the codes used during analysis. Extracts from the code-book are listed in Appendix J

| General Structural Themes | Emergent Student Themes | Emergent Staff Themes |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| language competence | identity | identity |
| language- support | progress | professional identity |
| educational expectations | | ideal student |
| relationships | | working conditions |
| | | student progress |
| | | plagiarism |
| | | |

Table 6: Themes

While the structural themes were the starting point, it became apparent when working with the data that other themes were present. For example the theme of the ‘ideal student’ did not present itself until the data had been read several times. Lecturers frequently mentioned both positive and negative attributes of students, and one lecturer repeatedly talked about a former student she regarded as a ‘model’ student not involved in the research. Several emergent themes emerged from the data and these are discussed in greater detail in chapters 4 and 5.

3.4.3 Discourse Analysis

Discourse Analysis examines both the way people choose to speak and the words they use as ‘social actors’ (Wetherell, et al., 2001:1).

Gee (2005:11-13) writes that we use seven different building tasks when we use language. We:

- ‘• give things value and significance.
- signal our engagement in activities.
- give ourselves identities.
- build relationships.
- engage in politics.
- build connections between things.
- use sign systems.’

‘Essentially, a discourse analysis involves asking questions about how language, at a given time and place, is used to construe the aspects of [the situation]...’ (Gee, 2005:110).

Discourse is therefore socially constructed and dependent on the situation or context that the individual finds him/herself in. Gee defines the term discourse in two ways. Firstly, Discourse, (with a big D), is used to describe patterns of social conversations, identity work and behaviour taking place in society which can endure over a long period of time, and can both pre-date and outlive individuals. To successfully participate in a Discourse one must not only say the right things but accompany this with the right actions and self-projection. Secondly, discourse, (with a little d), is what Gee calls

“language in use” (2005:26) comprising the actual talk between people in terms of what is actually said, including the specialist terms of the discourse as well as meaning.

All societies have common knowledge which helps to ascribe meaning to something that is said, which Gee (2005:21) calls a ‘Conversation’. A ‘Conversation’ is a topic or theme which is spoken and written about in a society, and about which people form opinions, for example, educational standards. These can be metaphorical and may be mistranslated or misunderstood by someone who either does not know them or who does not have the relevant ‘communicative competence’ (Hymes, 1967:9; Wooffitt, 2001:49). Furthermore, misunderstandings can arise where, although the speaker has no knowledge of the ‘Conversation’, the listener does and interprets the speaker’s meaning using this knowledge.

Alvesson and Sköldberg (2000:134) contend that it is debatable whether people actually have solid beliefs which they can explicitly express, possessing instead beliefs, values and cultural norms which change with any given situation that a person finds themselves in. This is not incompatible with a socially constructed view of Discourse where individuals move between multiple Discourses adapting both their behaviour and way of speaking to suit their current situation. Discourses are socially constructed (Gee, 2005:6) with the values and norms of a society being reflected in the Discourses which, in

turn, evolves as society and its Conversations change (Gee, 2005:49-50).

Discourse Analysis is one method of analysing data gathered in interviews. It is subjective and arguably other interpretations may be applied to the discourse. However, '[t]he validity of an analysis is not a matter of how detailed one's transcript is. It is a matter of how the transcript works together with all the other elements of the analysis to create a "trustworthy" analysis' (Gee, 2005:106). Thus Discourse Analysis can be validated by detailed contextually based investigations of the discourse, which when applied to the data used in this study, provided insights into which Discourses the respondents aligned themselves to and which values and norms they espoused, thus demonstrating what they believed important and significant

Themes emerge because respondents talk about what is important to them. How they do so is where Discourse Analysis as analytical tool is indispensable. Examining the particular ways people say something can indicate not only the position they are taking within a Discourse, but what image they want to give. Discourse Analysis of the data helps to show how respondents engage in recognition work to position themselves within the Conversations which were taking place at the College and how they portrayed themselves within societal Discourses at large.

Gee (2011:195) recommends a set of tools or questions that the analyst can ask when analysing data. For example, when a lecturer talked about previous students, I asked myself what the purpose of the statement was, Gee calls this the 'Doing and not just saying tool' (Gee, 2011:42) in other words what deed the speaker is aiming to perform. The lecturer had not been asked about that particular student so what was she doing when she talked about the student? I argue in section 4.4.1 that she was positioning herself as a lecturer of a successful student, and thus by association a successful lecturer, as opposed to a lecturer of the potentially unsuccessful students that she was being interviewed about. This of course leads to another question, 'Why did the lecturer need to do this?': the answer to which leads to more questions. Gee recommends that by successively asking questions of the data without predetermined expectations and theories that the researcher will uncover the views of the participants of the discourse.

Discourse Analysis cannot prove a hypothesis but rather can only provide evidence to support it or disprove it (Gee, 2005:13). The researcher must try their utmost to report all the evidence in an unbiased and fair way (Yin, 2009:112) and must be open to evidence which does not support their hypothesis (Gee, 2005:14). As discussed previously in section 2.5.1 people build identities by what they say and what they do, Gee argues that this socially constructed identity is part of a Discourse, for example, the Discourse of what

counts as an 'ideal student' or 'lecturer professionalism' which recognises that the identities that people project, either successfully or unsuccessfully, are part of a long history of socially constructed identities and, furthermore, individuals do not invent an identity/Discourse but take on and adapt one which exists in a society already (Gee, 2005:27). This can cause problems for non-native speakers who have a limited vocabulary, as arguably they have less choice between words to present an image or make a subtle point. They have to use the words that are available to them even when they know that they do not express exactly what they would like to say. This had implications for this research: while the L2 students may have wished to demonstrate that they were an active participant in a Discourse they may not have had the language skills to do so.

3.4.4 Combining Techniques

Combining Thematic Analysis and Discourse Analysis was useful because they complemented each other in important aspects. The identification of themes allowed the Discourses and Conversations of the college to be explored, and as discussed at section 3.4.2 above, both Discourses and Conversations are linked to identity, thereby allowing the positions of respondents to be identified within them.

3.5 Ethics

3.5.1 Requesting permission and participant selection

The Principal and the Senior Management Team (SMT) of the college have an important role as gatekeepers to protect the students and staff from potentially harmful research (Wiles, et al., 2004:19).

Permission from the College Principal to research the college and interview both the staff and the students, was requested in writing, in the form of an email to the Principal, outlining amongst other things the nature of the research and what it would entail, as well as supplying a copy of the initial project proposal. Permission was received from the College Principal on the condition that a research report was submitted to the college. At the beginning of the research in 2007 there was no requirement to submit the research proposal to the Ethics committee of the Open University as full, informed permission to research had been granted by the institution where the research was carried out. A commitment has been undertaken to submit a summary of the research after the thesis has been completed.

As the college had no data on how many students spoke English as a second language, permission was sought from the Assistant Principal responsible for administration to search through the student enrolment forms to find this information. Permission was granted to collate aggregated data as to languages spoken but not to approach

individuals on this basis (see section 3.3.1 above). To avoid potential difficulties with the Data Protection Act no personal-information was gathered.

3.5.2 Informed consent

It is important to consider whether any research project will cause any harm and risk to the respondents, and to inform them of the possible risks to themselves so that they give their informed consent to take part in the research (Punch, 2005:277; BAAL, 2006:4). It is doubtful if there can ever be truly (fully) informed consent. It is difficult to explain all aspects of a research project, indeed, at the beginning of the research, the researcher may not be aware of all the implications of the project themselves or alternatively it may be important to the research not to reveal these to avoid skewing the responses. For this research all respondents were adults and not classed as vulnerable people requiring consent from a third party (Wiles, *et al.*, 2004:9). Face-to-face meetings took place where oral consent was sought, after I had explained the content of the research and given assurances that all reasonable steps would be taken to anonymise the data. If the consent was given, the respondents were then asked to sign a written consent form (see Appendix L). In cases where I had doubts about the students' abilities to understand written English, the consent form was read to them and they were asked if they could explain what it meant. This process ensured that they not only understood what they were consenting to but also overcame the

difficulties that can arise where respondents do not take time to read information provided in a written form. In some areas 24 hours consideration time is recommended as best practice (Wiles, *et al.*, 2004:16): however, since the respondents had the ability to withdraw at any time, this was not thought to be critical.

All participants were told about their right to withdraw from the project when they were first approached; withdrawing would have meant that all the interviews would have been withdrawn from the data. None of the participants formally withdrew from the research although the ability to study some participants ended prematurely, when for example they moved out of the area or left the college without leaving a forwarding address or other contact details.

Because this is a small-scale project within a relatively small college I could not guarantee to the respondents that the data could be sufficiently anonymised to protect their identities. However, I did undertake to protect their identities as much as possible by assigning them a pseudonym reflecting their cultural background. The key which links the data to the pseudonyms is stored separately to both items. However because of the small number of English as a second language students at the college to write simply about 'a female Asian student, studying Child Care' could in practice allow the student to be identified. As the lecturers work for the college they may have perceived that they were vulnerable to harm caused by the research, either in terms of possibly critical comments by the

participating students or by expressing opinions which did not fit in with the ethos of the college (BAAL, 2006:4; Hammersley & Traianou, 2007). I did not wish either the lecturers or the students to withhold any comments that were uncomplimentary to the college: therefore often more than one lecturer was interviewed in relation to each student thus making it harder to identify an individual lecturer. To further avoid possible links between individuals and their views, the report given to the college will not contain details of the case studies but will focus on the discussions and findings.

This project did not offer any of the respondents any incentives for taking part in the project. That is however not to say that the respondents did not perceive that there would be a benefit to them. For example in the pilot study one of the students used the interview to ask for support which was not generally available. While the request was noted lack of resources prevented it and the student was advised accordingly. Similarly the amount of support the students received did not change because they were involved in the research.

Often researchers can be faced with ethical dilemmas as to whether to act or write up and report a situation which they feel is harmful to the respondents or others (Hammersley & Traianou, 2007). My role within the college as a Learning Centre Manager meant that I had an obligation to support students where possible and deal with any issues as they happened: so I would not have been able to allow a

harmful situation to play out to its end because of my obligations as a member of staff within the college. However, no such situation arose.

3.5.3 Storing and Disposal of Data

Data gathered during the course of the research was stored in both paper and electronic form. The majority of the participants' data are in electronic form, for example, audio recordings and their transcripts, and are stored on a password protected computer. Paper records identifying students and lecturers, such as the signed consent forms, are stored away from the raw data generated by this research and are not included in the thesis or appendices. All data is stored in a securely located locked filing cabinet and as no undertaking has been given to destroy the data after the completion of the thesis it will remain stored thus allowing it to be revisited in the future.

3.6 Overview of research design

This ethnographically informed research took the form of a multiple case study where individual student case studies are embedded into the college context.

In 2007-2008 a pilot study was conducted using semi-structured interviews for students and questionnaires for lecturers. The poor response to the questionnaire led this to being replaced with semi-structured interviews in the main research.

The semi-structured interviews took place from 2007-2011. The students were interviewed once during each semester and the

lecturers were interviewed at the end of the 2009 semester. One lecturer was interviewed twice and this interview took place in September 2011. The IDO was also interviewed at this time.

Learning centre observations took place during the academic year of 2009 with one observation for each student. Statistical data about the number of students who spoke English as a second language was gathered at the beginning of the 2008-2009 academic year while the data on student performance was gathered at the end of each students' course. The data collection methods which informed the research questions are illustrated in Table 7 below.

| What kind of challenges do students with English as a second-language experience in relation to: | Interviews | Observations | Attainment Statistics | College Policy and Documentation |
|---|-------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|---|
| Issues of language competence. | √ | √ | √ | |
| English as a second-language-support. | √ | √ | | √ |
| Expectations about educational practices. | √ | | | √ |
| Relationships with staff and students. | √ | √ | | |

Table 7: Research Questions - Data Collection Methods

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has justified using a sociocultural approach along with a multiple case study method of researching the complex experiences of students within a further education college. This approach allows the voices of those who are normally acted upon to be heard within the research rather than using the policies and procedures of the college as the focus of the research. This approach also allows the students' interview data to be enriched by comparing it with interviews with their lecturers, statistical data on student attendance and achievement, learning centre observations and policy documentation, all of which add to the validity of the findings.

Although a small amount of quantitative data, documentation and observational data was collected most of the data comes from semi-structured interviews with a range of students in terms of age, gender and fields of study, and with their lecturers. The methodological choices that were made, including the combination of Thematic Analysis and Discourse Analysis, allow the research questions to be addressed and allow the difficulties the students experience to be explored without pre-judgment. In addition to establishing the case study approach as a valid method of enquiry, this chapter also examined the ethical considerations surrounding it. While these case studies cannot be exactly replicated I have argued that the context of the college is typical enough of other Scottish FE colleges for the

results of this research to be significant to other colleges both in Scotland and beyond, as well as being interesting in their own right.

Chapter 4: Staff perspectives

This Chapter deals with the perspectives of the academic and support staff⁶ who taught/supported the L2 students featured in the case studies, enunciating their perceptions of the challenges the students faced and their impact on the educational experience of both students and lecturers. The presentation of these before the students' perspectives allows some background information that is pertinent to, but was not revealed in, the student data to be illuminated. The chapter outlines the positions and background of the staff discussing their interview responses using both thematic and discourse analysis (see section 3.4). Structural themes of language competence, educational expectations, staff/ student relationships and language support were imposed by the research questions but during the analysis of the staff interviews other themes such as, the 'ideal student, the professional identity of the lecturers and their working conditions emerged. These additional themes worked with the structural themes to reveal complex interactions within the college environment which impact on both the L2 student and staff educational experience.

⁶ Support-staff comprise administrative and other personnel who teach non-certificated courses such as study-skills, basic-skills (literacy and/or numeracy) and ESOL.

4.1 Staff profiles

Eight members of staff were interviewed, seven of whom were lecturers in three of the five college departments namely Business, Art and Design and Health and Social Care and one was the International Development Officer (IDO), (see Table 3, section 3.3.1 and Appendix H). All the members of staff were assigned a pseudonym reflecting their gender and ethnicity (see section 3.5.2). They were recruited to the research on the basis that they taught students who were involved in the research: at least one for each student.

Of the lecturers three were female and four were male. All lecturers interviewed were at least 45 years old with some being in the later stages of their career, reflecting the general age range of the lecturing staff at large. All the other lecturers (except Tom who was temporary/part-time) were full time permanent staff and had been with the college for at least five years, some having over 20 years of service. Most lecturers had only taught in further education, though some previously worked as school teachers or in industry.

The IDO was female, 28 years old, and a PRC national was on a temporary contract for nine months covering the maternity leave of the permanent IDO (also a PRC National).

4.1.1 Working conditions

All full time lecturers were contracted to work thirty-five hours per week of which twenty-four hours were contact (teaching) time. Tom, the part time lecturer, only worked four hours per week. Every teaching hour accrued fifteen minutes preparation time for lesson planning and assignment marking, the rest of the time (five hours) was designated for staff meetings, staff development and student support. Time was a recurring issue for the lecturers who felt under great time pressure complaining that this impacted on their ability to support students.

‘you're busy with teaching the basics, [...] you don't have time for peripheral issues’ (Neil, Interview:21.05.09).

I have not got the time to change, to accommodate two students out of 22 (Tom, Interview:29.05.09).

‘I’m even using lunch hour, it’s not even a lunch hour, using that to prepare the next classes. (Pauline, Interview:19.05.09)

‘Problem with time and the preparation... because that [meeting additional needs] is specialised to prepare that... and also there were so many other students in there... needing so many other things, (Rhona, Interview:17.04.09)

‘I couldn’t possibly get round all the students within a tutorial group’ (Susan, Interview:22.05.09).

'I simply didn't have the time to do it, unless it was something really alarming' (Victor, Interview:03.04.09).

The lecturers not only felt that they did not have enough time to do everything required, they also felt that the senior management team did not understand this,

'I don't think they care, because they're wanting lecturers to teach 860 hours [over the academic year]. Whenever it is, it doesn't matter to them. (Neil, Interview:21.05.09).

'I think the ideology is there but the actual practice isn't you know. I think they talk the talk and... But it's all about PI's [Performance-Indicators] and funding and stuff at the end of the day' (Susan, Interview:22.05.09).

This time pressure was also felt by the IDO whose duties included marketing as well as L2 pastoral-care. Some timings for these duties clashed and being constantly on call and making herself available to students at all times caused problems.

'I had been constantly interrupted in the office [...] even sometimes during the weekends. I found it difficult [...] they can be sensitive. If you tell them, "Oh, I'm busy, can you come back another time?" They will feel like they have been neglected... and that is what I'm trying to avoid' (Yen, Interview:09.09.11).

In the quote above Yen expresses the competition between supporting students and other tasks. These pressures were felt by all staff interviewed and I will go on to argue that the pressure on the lecturers' time affected their view of the students and ability to support them.

4.2 Issues around language competence

As discussed in section 1.2 the lecturers perceived language competence as an area of difficulty for the L2 students but their assessment was based upon student contact and the outcomes of the core-skill diagnostic test (see section 2.2.1). The degree and nature of language problems were not reported consistently even for the same students. Some highlighted the need for a more general proficiency in English:

'obviously, the language is an issue.' (Pauline,
Interview:19.05.09)

'I only had one other Chinese girl and language was a big
problem in that instance.' (Victor, Interview:03.04.09)

'...their English actually is not very good.' (Yen,
Interview:09.09.11)

'She just doesn't have the expression.' (Rhona,
Interview:17.04.09)

‘...the lack of written comprehension of English was a difficulty, a real difficulty for them.’ (Neil, Interview:21.05.09)

Subject specific English was also found by some to be lacking and this was believed to have a direct impact on L2 students’ performance. When I raised the question of whether course specific English was more important than general English, the latter was believed to be more important. Neil reported that he had to stop using a subject specific term because the L2 students could not understand it but when asked if subject specific tutorials would help he stated that what was needed was general English

‘if the base is not solid enough, it’s just going to crumble, and the whole thing is going to fall down. I think the idea of just getting a basic building block of communication [that] they understand about asking questions, and the responses that they’re going to get.’ (Neil, Interview:21.05.09)

Here Neil highlights the ability to ask questions and understand the answers to those questions as a key language skill which students lacked. Good general English was seen as the foundation without which subject specific English could not be built but there was some evidence that the ‘Myth of Transience’ (section 2.1.3) featured in the thinking of staff.

‘I just hope she manages to get this language thing sorted’
(Rhona, Interview:19.05.09)

For Rhona, 'this language thing', Amy's ability to use English, was a major issue that time and English-lessons would remedy. The phrase 'this language thing' and the word 'sorted' suggests an attitude towards language as a technical-problem which can be fixed. The use of 'she' rather than 'we' implies that for Rhona, Amy's issue with the English language was Amy's problem, and Rhona was not part of the solution, which evinces the argument (in Section 2.2.2) that lecturers' attitudes to language are consistent with seeing English as a technical skill separate from the academic subject being taught. Indeed, Rhona stated that she had advised Amy to take a year out to improve her English before returning to study Social Care.

Writing was also highlighted as a problem, as L2 students could not fully demonstrate their knowledge and understanding in writing:

'...to improve her standard of English and her responses. It's not that she doesn't understand, it's her inability to show, express that in her language.' (Rhona, Interview:17.04.09)

Lecturers reported that they made special assessment arrangements to support L2 students who were having difficulties writing. Amy, in her first year, was allowed to give her answers as bullet points instead of full answers as was expected from other students. Neil reported that it was an option to accept oral-answers to the questions instead of written or use them to clarify a written answer too difficult to decipher. (All access level courses designed and presented by the

college allowed greater scope for making such special assessment arrangements).

For students undertaking higher level courses (Bijon, Katarzyna, Dita), the special assessment arrangements that can be given are set out by SQA (see Appendix M). Speaking English as a second language is not a disability and generally L2 students are expected to perform to the same standards and conditions as L1 students with an extra ten minutes given only if the L2 student is using a L1-to-English language dictionary. Special arrangements were not meant to make assessments easier and this was acknowledged by Wallace and Rhona.

‘...but at the end of the day you've got to hit the standard.’

(Wallace, Interview:10.06.09)

‘As well as she’s been able to express to me verbally, I can accept these bullet points, but it’s [got to have] all the key elements in it’ (Rhona, Interview:17.04.09).

Making special arrangements is not consistent with Kutz’s (1986:385) argument that lecturers fear to drop standards (see section 2.1.2) but the willingness to organise these may be driven by the need to have students pass their course: too many failing students can diminish the professional identity of lecturers (see 4.4.1 below).

4.2.1 Plagiarism

English language competency was cited as one of the reasons for plagiarism. Three lecturers made comments about plagiarism being a problem with all students, not just L2 students, and it was felt that, with the increasing use of the internet, plagiarism was on the increase (see section 2.1.2) to the extent that lecturers were getting used to it.

‘And it’s not as horrifying as it used to be’ (Pauline,
Interview:09.09.11)

Pauline understood why plagiarism happened.

‘They do it because they desperately want to pass, and there’s all kinds of pressures about staying in college and passing the course in order to stay in the UK. So it’s like desperate measures.’ (Pauline, Interview:09.09.11)

Poor written language skills were also seen as a factor in the problem of plagiarism for all students: unable to effectively paraphrase and synthesise what they were reading led students to copy from books and the internet. For some L2 students this was seen as a language deficit rather than an attempt at cheating. Yen explained how accidental plagiarism happens:

‘they’re learning the knowledge and English at the same time. So if they find a sentence that’s pretty good from the book, they lack the structure, they lack the vocabulary used in that

sentence, well the thing is they try to remember it, and they write it down in their own essay. But that is copying. They didn't know that...' (Yen, Interview:09.09.11).

Yen describes plagiarism as occurring unwittingly during the struggle to become an accomplished academic writer. She claims, for the Chinese students, at least, this would not occur in their native language because they can express themselves fluently.

However for other L2 students it was seen as an attempt to cut corners at best and at worst to cheat:

'I think there was a tendency... it was a danger, they wanted to see what others had done. Now, my concern is that... it's not a case of seeing what others have done... copying [...] one of the essays for the exam. All I wrote on it was "cut and paste". And as soon as she saw what I'd written, she admitted it' (Neil, Interview:21.05.09).

'...a student who speaks English as a second language... downloaded a report from the internet and handed in the whole report' (Pauline, Interview:09.09.11).

'They can cheat. They do cheat'. (Pauline, Interview:09.09.11).

The college did not have plagiarism detection software such as Turnitin or Copycatch but the lecturers felt that plagiarism was easy

to detect in students' writing using their knowledge of students' ability and where there was any doubt they would use the internet to search for a particular phrase.

'And I mean, it was fairly obvious, I mean, really obvious that this was not her level of English' (Neil, Interview:21.05.09).

'Oh, you don't need software you just Google it. [...] if you read something and you think "Hmm, they didn't write that" you just Google it, type it in, and it will bounce it right back up again' (Pauline, Interview:09.09.11).

Incidences of plagiarism were dealt with informally because the lecturers did not feel supported by management. They felt that if a student appealed an academic judgement to senior management then the appeal would always favour the student as no student had ever been excluded because of intentional plagiarism.

'And, again, with a foreign student, if there's a quality issue I think that we would know that if the student said it was a language problem, it was pressure of work, then there's no point in us really pursuing it in terms of a disciplinary [procedure] with a foreign student because it would just bounce back to us anyhow'. (Pauline, Interview:09.09.11).

There is no separate policy on plagiarism but it is mentioned in the Assessment and Re-Assessment Policy which states "Anyone involved in plagiarism will be dealt with through the Student

Discipline Procedure ..." (Appendix E) however, plagiarism is listed in the following Section on Malpractice which states "The College Management will discuss issues of malpractice in each individual circumstance" although it does go on to say that those guilty of malpractice "will be dealt with through the Student Discipline Procedure" (Appendix E). Despite the official policy to use the discipline procedure to refer someone for cheating through the college referral system this was seen by Pauline as an act of a very frustrated lecturer trying to deal with a persistent offender.

'I would say that if you were seeing it in a referral then.....that's the tip of the iceberg, that would be my experience. If people are actually putting it down in writing in a referral then it's probably gone on more than once, becausewe would always give the student the benefit of the doubt '(Pauline, Interview:09.09.11).

4.2.2 Summary of issues around language competence

Lecturers regard English language competence as a problem, albeit a transient one, which will improve as the student gained more experience with English thus the 'myth of transience' does appear to figure in their thinking. The lecturers did not view English language teaching as being part of their role, confirming a technical view of English. Issues with English language competence were perceived as having an impact on the students' ability to express themselves in class and demonstrate knowledge and understanding in

assessments but lecturers would make special arrangements for assessments where permitted. Plagiarism is a growing problem for all students and is perceived by the lecturers as having two forms:

- (a) accidental plagiarism caused by a combination of poor language-skills, where students do not have the ability to write in their own words and lack academic writing experience, which results in inadequate paraphrasing which is not regarded as cheating but as a failure to reference properly: or
- (b) deliberate plagiarism, which is regarded as cheating, principally caused by poor or inadequate subject knowledge which takes the form of copying other students work, publications or internet material and passing it off as their own work.

However, no matter the form the plagiarism takes it is very likely to be dealt with informally unless a student is a persistent offender.

4.3 English as a second language support

English language competence is seen as a major issue but, by failing to see the solution as part of their remit, the course content lecturers moved responsibility for language competence to general English language tutors and the students themselves. Thus, they did not consider changing their classroom practice (see section 2.3.1). As discussed above this was apparent in Rhona's attitude to Amy's difficulty in expressing herself in English: it was a problem for Amy to

fix rather than something that Rhona would become involved with. However, as discussed in section 4.1.1 lecturers had a full teaching-load and lack of time may also have contributed to these attitudes. As Neil stated:

‘The other thing that I would probably say is that the amount of time they [lecturers] spend with one individual, either needs to be rationed or very focused’ (Neil, Interview:21.05.09).

But Neil also worried about lecturers’ competence to support students as this was outwith their subject specialism and could lead to diminished professional status.

‘Because to begin with, you’re going to be faced with situations that you don’t know how to deal with. And when you’re put in that situation, it puts you under stress. But also, such that will undermine your ability and your authority, because they start to question whether you actually know what you’re talking about.’ (Neil, Interview:21.05.09)

As outlined previously in section 1.2, the college had an ILC which supported ESOL students. The lecturers often saw the ILC as the first stop when students needed support.

‘very very quickly signposted them to the ILC you know ensure that they had the opportunity to work on their core

skills and that there was somebody there that could help them' (Susan, Interview:22.05.09)

'they can use that to then go and seek guidance from the ILC, or wherever else' (Neil, Interview:21.05.09).

However it was also seen as the students' responsibility to access the support and if they did not avail themselves of the support then they were seen as less deserving of lecturer-support.

'but again, he's been advised last year and this year consistently to make use of facilities, to make use of help that the college has, and he won't do it' (Pauline, Interview:19.05.09).

'... there's this kind of gulf between one part of the college and another part of the college and there's no bridge in between' (Tom, Interview:29.05.09).

'But what they will both find this time, they will be dragged in here [ILC] by the scruff of the neck' (Neil, Interview:21.05.09).

Since the lecturers were aware that only general English support was available in the ILC the signposting and direction of students to the ILC is another clear indicator that the students' problems were defined by the lecturers as general language problems which would disappear with support. There was little recognition by the lecturers

that the support on offer might be inappropriate, but Yen (Interview:09.09.11) related an incident where a student had arrived early in Scotland with the intention of studying English at the college before her course started. Although the International Student Guide (Appendix E) advertised a full time English course this never ran and so she was directed to the ILC for one-to-one tuition rather than the course. The student did not however rate the experience highly and had complained to Yen that it was a waste of her time and she was not learning anything.

'Because the English she was learning ... she could [already] understand everything ... it's not really subject related.' (Yen, Interview:09.09.11)

This aligns with Connor's (1996) argument that ESOL support generally concentrates on grammar and is de-contextualised (see section 2.2.2) and with Peelo and Luxon (2007) (see section 2.2.3) who argue that these general support classes do not cover individual needs. Norton (2000) (see section 2.5.2), moreover, argues that students in this situation will disengage from the learning experience because it is not worth the investment they are making. Because the English language support was not subject related the link to the future course and professional identity was unclear, Yen reported that the student (who previously studied English at secondary school level) did not find it gave her the support she sought. Similarly, lecturers appeared not to have considered that the ILC support might

have been inappropriate to the students' needs and thus the reasons for students not attending. In other words, the benefits did not justify the opportunity cost (See section 2.5.2) of attendance. Staff understood that students had busy lives and that it was difficult to keep up the enthusiasm to do extra work especially if they did not believe they needed support. Two of the lecturers thought that some form of compulsory support would benefit the students.

'I think if that was made compulsory, then they're much more likely to see this as a place where they could get support across the year instead of failing an essay' (Pauline, Interview:19.05.009).

When their L2 students failed their first essay the Social Care department organised compulsory support to help. Previously the department who had a number of Chinese students assumed they were managing the course work because any time the lecturers asked if the students understood they were given a positive reply.

'The lecturers have been asking them questions as a class sometimes, but students tend not to give them feedback, or very useful feedback. They would say, "Oh, everything is fine. Okay, yes. It's okay."' (Yen, Interview:09.09.11)

Students may not have wanted to lose face by being classified as a struggling student. However, Yen suggests another explanation.

'it was so hard for them, they didn't even know they didn't understand.' (Yen Interview:09.09.11)

In this explanation the students were 'unconscious incompetents' (see section 2.2.1), that is, completely unaware that there was more to understand. The Care department provided their L2 students with an essay writing workshop which not only explained the format but also gave examples and model-answers to questions. This was judged to be successful:

'It's like, learning, actually learning.' (Yen, Interview:09.09.11)

Other lecturers did try to accommodate the L2 students in their class but time constrained what they were able to do for example Rhona gave handouts to all students to allow them to either read ahead of class or to take the strain of note taking away from the students. The college was in the early stages of using online learning to support the students and, although not available at the start of 2008-2009, web pages that could be translated into other languages via translation programmes were used for the first time during that academic year.

'the blog [web page] helped all our students, not just them [L2 students]' (Neil, Interview:21.05.09).

In addition to the academic support provided and the system of personal tutors the IDO provided pastoral support to the Chinese students not only in the practical form of organising housing and mobile telephones but also through mediating disputes or

misunderstandings, general moral support and encouragement. This type of support was not provided to L1 students although a variety of counselling and signposting services were available to all students through the student advisors in the student-services department.

To conclude, the college offered educational support to all its students through the ILC and the lecturers saw this as the place to refer L2 students who had language issues, although time issues and subject specialism concerns may have influenced this view. The pedagogical practices of the ILC had developed along 'technicist' lines with a dependence on English teaching books (see section 1.2.2) and so offered de-contextualised language support. Although one member of staff questioned the appropriateness of the support offered, and one department offered a contextualised support opportunity, in general members of the college staff appeared to accept that the ILC was the main language support opportunity for the students even though this provided general and not subject specific English.

4.4 Issues around Identity

Two distinct themes of identity emerged from the staff data set: the professional identity of the staff and the identity of the students from the perspective of the college staff.

Through my undernoted examination below of the professional identities of the staff and their concept of 'the ideal student', I shall

argue that these two identities are both intertwined in the students' educational experience. Firstly I explore the concept of the lecturers' professional identity in terms of what Sachs (2001) (see section 2.4.2) calls 'democratic professional identity' and 'managerial professional identity' before going on to look at the identity of students as perceived by the lecturers. 'The ideal student' (see section 4.4.2) is a benchmark of student behaviour which exemplifies the lecturers' perceived expectations of best educational practice, and their discourse demonstrates how the lecturers, through a series of positive and negative comparisons, compare individual students to their conception of the 'ideal student'.

4.4.1 Professional Identity of the staff

While the members of staff all gave the impression of being comfortable during the interview process, with relaxed open body-language, some lecturers engaged in recognition work (see section 2.5.1) demonstrating that they were conscious of their professional identity and were keen to establish themselves as professionals. Without being prompted this was evinced, for example, by their use of course specific technical terms, referencing previous work-experience, highlighting academic/course work they did in their own time and narrating their experiences with students who were not part of the research. The respondents thus sought to establish themselves as competent professionals. Successful students add positively to the professional identity of the lecturers, for instance

Pauline talked about a former student Mirka who had been very successful and progressed to university. Mirka's success and the support that Pauline gave showed Pauline's professionalism in a good light and the positive language used to describe Mirka contrasted with the less positive and sometimes negative language used to describe her current students Bijon and Katarzyna.

'She [Mirka], again, was very independent' (Pauline Interview:19.05.09)

'he [Bijon] looks for a shortcut' (Pauline Interview:19.05.09)

The lecturers employing these techniques were those whose students were seen as less than ideal (Pauline, Neil, Tom, Rhona, Wallace) while those who spoke positively about their students and who indicated that the success of their students was assured did not (Victor and Susan). As discussed in section 2.5.1, Street (2010:236) argues that people often fear being 'found out' by others, losing their professional identity as well as the social-standing and resources which accompany it. As discussed in section 4.3, subject knowledge contributes to this identity but managerial professionalism stems from the need to meet managerial standards and targets. The use of the above techniques would indicate that the lecturers are aware of a link between their professional status and the success of their students. It would appear that lecturers with underperforming students were concerned that the problems that their students were experiencing

would reflect badly on their professional standing: one lecturer (who was also the curriculum coordinator for his department) stated this view explicitly, clearly stating that poor student performance was linked to professional ability.

‘But if we don't get them through their course then we haven't done a very good job.’ (Wallace, Interview:10.06.09)

This quote shows the concept of managerial professionalism with its emphasis on accountability (see section 2.4.2) appearing to influence lecturers' professional identity but professionalism was also expressed in terms of their attitudes and engagement with their students:

‘we want success... We want success for our students’ (Neil, Interview:21.09.09)

The above quote shows the link between student success and the lecturer's professional recognition. While successful students can bring professional recognition, problem or non-ideal students do not.

‘I do object to see folk falling asleep in my class’. (Neil, Interview:21.09.09)

The phrase, ‘my class’, shows that this loss of control within the classroom (Zamel, 2004:4) was taken as a personal slight even though the lecturer knew the student was working at night. Students, as adult learners, were seen as being responsible for their own

classroom behaviour and, while some behaviour was personally annoying to the lecturer, there was a recognition that some behaviour did not impact on their professional-status. The same lecturer commenting about another student remarked:

‘But she was like that in every class. It wasn't just mine’.

(Neil, Interview:21.09.09)

A student whose behaviour causes problems in all classes will be categorised as a problem student and it would appear that this type of student is not regarded as a threat to professional identity because it is not personal.

In summary, Professional identity appears to be important to the lecturers, although much of the identity is acquired from both educational and industrial experience, as society demands more accountability and higher educational standards, it also comes from the academic success of students (see section 2.4.2). Mindful of this, colleges typically analyse achievement-rates for courses and discuss failures, consequently lecturers can feel pressured into having high pass rates for their taught courses. Failures, as indicated by Wallace’s comment above, can tarnish professional reputations, therefore a convenient and opportune solution is simply to blame these failures on the students.

4.4.2 The 'Ideal Student'

Analysis of the data revealed recurring patterns in the lecturers' accounts of what they saw as admirable qualities in students suggesting a shared underlying concept of an 'ideal student'.

Although they did not explicitly hold any one particular student up as ideal they all mentioned attributes and characteristics of students in either a positive or negative light. While some of these were stated explicitly, others would often be implied in the stated shortcomings of the current students. This would suggest that within education there is a Conversation (see section 3.4.3) around the idea of the 'ideal student' to which the lecturers contribute.

From the analysis a number of attributes were highlighted as factors indicative of the 'ideal student': independence, good study skills, academic ability and motivation

Ideal trait n° 1: Independence

Recurring lecturer comments suggest that an 'ideal student' takes responsibility for their own learning and is not dependent on the lecturers. Pauline sums up this attitude in the quote below:

'You know, it's what we all try and do, encourage them to be independent as far as possible, you know. There's a big... any new lecturer coming in... there's a big ego-trip in being, [...] necessary to a student, do you know what I mean? Whereas, really our job is making ourselves redundant,

making ourselves unnecessary, do you know what I mean?

The student's working independently then. (Pauline,

Interview:19.05.09)

This attribute of the 'ideal student', who is independent and does not need extra support or effort on the part of the lecturer, seems at odds with the idea of the supportive student environment as promoted by the college in general. Although lecturers seem to have expressed a desire for students to work independently, this does not mean that they do not want to help students. The action of a student seeking clarification from a lecturer was highlighted as helpful and proactive behaviour which enhanced the student-performance.

'.... Dita would wait behind and clarify that this is what she had to do, she would go away, do it and come back [...] So she was constantly checking her learning.' (Susan

Interview:22.05.09)

'...before he leaves the studio at the end of the day if there is something that is unclear he will come up and say how many words to the essay or something if something was wrong.'

(Victor, Interview:03.04.09)

This casts the lecturer into the role of a resource for the student rather than taking the lead role in the learning experience and is compatible with the learner centred approach taken in many areas of Scottish education especially adult literacy (Scottish Government,

2001). However, for student centred learning to be successful the learner must be prepared to be at the centre of their learning and take responsibility for it.

The concept of the redundant lecturer is also at odds with some of the claims made by Pauline when establishing her professional identity (see above) so what is behind this concept? Pauline mentions 'any new lecturer' but there was only one new lecturer, Tom, who was new not only to the business department but to lecturing in general. He had been approached by Bijon for extra support but because Tom was a temporary sessional lecturer who was only paid for his classroom teaching-time any extra support had to be provided in Tom's own time, though acceptable to Tom he was warned against it by other staff because Bijon had not attended the extra support offered in the ILC.

'I wanted to give extended support to Bijon in particular, and Katarzyna, but because they hadn't gone to the ILC [...] Bijon in particular...' (Tom, Interview:29.05.09)

Bijon was a student who was not considered worthy of extra support because of poor attendance at both regular course and additional support classes and although he actively tried to make up for his absences by looking for support from his lecturers and classroom peers this was not viewed as being pro-active but as cutting corners (see section 5.2 for the full case). Pauline knew that Tom was to be

interviewed and it is possible that she made the above statement partly because she wished to preserve her professional identity and to justify her reasons for not supporting Bijon, the 'less than ideal student'.

'Ideal students' were expected to be active in their learning in particular ways. For instance, staff highlighted the need for students to read ahead and actively prepare for class.

'But what they should do is they should read the books recommended by the lecturers and find chapters talking about this question' (Yen, Interview:09.09.11)

Three members of staff looked back to their student days and compared the current students against their remembered standards:

'One, the students don't fundamentally do what I did when I was a student which was you go home and you get stuck in and you work and you read and you try and read ahead: that culture seems to have disappeared' (Tom. Interview:29.05.09).

'And that's just in you and it goes way back from when you're young, so how can you put that in someone who doesn't have that?...' (Pauline Interview:09.09.11).

'When I was writing my graduation essay, yes, I just basically spent a lot of time with my friends, my classmates. So I

learned a lot from having discussions with them.' (Yen,
Interview:09.09.11)

As the lecturers selectively remembered their university days, the students were found wanting. It should be noted that all the staff interviewed were university graduates thus they were comparing higher education students to further education students which is not a like-for-like comparison.

The lecturers saw the 'ideal student' taking control of their learning opportunities, making sure that they are prepared for class, reading ahead and proactively seeking clarification of points raised in lectures, ideally immediately after the class. However, some of the case study students were seen as failing to take responsibility, not only for their learning in general but for their lack of English comprehension in particular, by disguising their lack of understanding.

'They're all like smiley, polite and nice and courteous and all this kind of stuff and they will actually agree with something, so for example if I turned round to them and said, "Ah Bijon this is black" he'll go, "Yes it is" and it's white!' (Tom,
Interview:29.05.09)

Ideal trait n° 2: Good study skills

While the lecturers believed they had some responsibility to give support to and make adjustments for some L2 students, others were

seen as not doing enough for themselves and taking responsibility for their needs. L2 students were expected to be able to recognise that studying in a second language could be difficult and consequently had to work harder and not become disillusioned. Yen however commented that students frequently needed encouragement and, although giving up the course was such a big step that it was never really considered, the students frequently stopped working when the extra work was not reflected in their progress.

‘But after a while, if they find out they are still not making much progression. What they tend to do is they tend to spend less hours in their study...’ (Yen, Interview:09.09.11)

Pauline was very clear in her opinion that some students were using the fact that English was not their first language as an excuse for poor performance and so were not trying hard enough, echoing Tinto’s findings (1997, p. 600) discussed in section 2.1.3.

‘we need to put clear expectations on the students as well and really get them to realise that saying ‘Well, English isn’t my first language’ is an excuse, you know, I mean, isn’t good enough.’ (Pauline, Interview:19.05.09)

The statement ‘we need to put clear expectations on the students’ suggests systemic policy failures, and that the responsibility for establishing and enforcing these wider expectations rests with the “collective we”, namely the lecturers, staff and the college

management. Pauline's comment that it 'isn't good enough' to simply base a failure to meet these wider expectations solely on poor language skills, is a criticism also of the general staff tendency to focus solely on these, as discussed earlier above.

The data set highlighted a general opinion amongst the lecturers that there was only so much they could do and it was really up to the L2 students to organise their own learning.

'...there's a limit to how many times you can make appointments with folk who don't turn up.' (Neil, Interview:21.05.09)

'...I've spent the time with them and appropriate signposting helps them and it helps me because I don't need to carry on putting that much time into that student.' (Susan, Interview:22.05.09)

'There's only so much you can do without the willingness on the other side and that's it.' (Rhona, Interview:17.04.09)

They were also perceived as poorly motivated in general and not taking responsibility for themselves.

'But they weren't very pro-active, even though we organised stuff for them. They weren't very good at turning up.' (Neil, Interview:21.05.09)

'... sometimes the student's energy is going somewhere, it's into making excuses about why things haven't got done or cutting corners' (Pauline, Interview:19.05.09)

Good organisational skills were seen as essential qualities for the 'ideal student' enabling them to study effectively and submit work on time. Late or poorly presented work is seen as a sign that these skills are poor. Moreover L2 students were specifically perceived as blaming lack of English competence and work pressures as further justification of these failings. Although the staff highlighted study skills as vitally important, they were not actively taught within the core curriculum being presented as additional non-compulsory tasks for those students who were given self directed study time.

Ideal trait n° 3: Academic Ability

The ideal student was expected to have good academic ability. This was seen as a vital attribute for success although the argument that the level of academic ability required for a college course would depend very much on the level of the course being undertaken did not seem to be taken into consideration.

'I would say, it very much depends on the student and their own level of intelligence and probably their own ability in their own language, and if they're able in their own language to quite quickly get up to speed, then they probably do better than some of our students' (Pauline, Interview:19.05.09).

‘She’s obviously a very able girl....,’ (Rhona,

Interview:17.04.09)

‘....she is intrinsically a very intelligent woman and that comes over.’ (Susan, Interview:22.05.09)

Dita (see section 5.3) was a graduate in Poland and this reinforced her positive identity but despite Amy’s problems with English she was still perceived as intelligent. This contradicts Le Roux’s (2001:275) argument, discussed in section 2.1.1, that teachers commonly associate poor English with low intelligence and this suggests that by the time the lecturer Rhona was interviewed (second semester) she had had time to get to know Amy and develop an appreciation of her practical skills which were thus interpreted as counterbalancing her English language difficulties leading to a different perception of her general level of intelligence.

‘she is a very bright girl and she is getting on very well obviously in her placement, so she’s obviously got the skills and she’s got the abilities to do well in this area’ (Rhona, Interview:17.04.09)

Ideal trait n° 4: Motivation

Ideal students were seen as highly motivated and working towards their future goals, planning ahead knowing what they wanted and being able to put the effort into getting it.

'She's been an amazing student.. highly motivated.' (Susan,
Interview:22.05.09)

'That's one thing that overseas students tend to be higher
motivated..' (Neil, Interview:21.05.09)

As discussed in section 2.5.2 Norton (1997:413) sees educational motivation in terms of an investment in the future identities of the students. Susan, Dita's lecturer, highlighted Dita's plans for the future when talking about her student's motivation, tying her investment in learning to her future identity.

'But she has also been incredibly focussed on what she wants to do she's applied for and been accepted on to her next course and she has a long term plan about what these courses are going to enable her to do.' (Susan
Interview:22.05.09)

Working students who allowed their work commitments to impact on their studies were not seen as highly motivated despite the recognition by lecturers that for some students work was essential for them to pay for their education. This was seen as a conflict of priorities and it was implied that the student should make up their mind about what they want in life.

'...at some point they have to decide on their own priorities, they can't have everything.' (Rhona, Interview:17.04.09)

'I knew of his background. I knew the problems, but I mean, I just can't make allowances ...' (Neil, Interview:21.05.09)

That student before the summer was basically told "Right, okay, well if you want to pass then you're going to have to take some time off work, so you can talk to your boss at work". And they did. And they did pass, which was surprising as if he hadn't taken time off work he wouldn't have passed. (Pauline, Interview:09.09.11)

The fact that the student took time off work and passed their course vindicated Pauline's judgement that work was getting in the way of this student's progress.

As discussed in section 2.5.2 using the term 'motivation' puts all the onus on the student, motivation is internalised and is seen as a fixed characteristic of the student whereas the notion of 'investment' (Norton, 1995:20) frames the responsibility as shared with the college itself. The educational opportunity offered by an educational institution or an individual lecturer must be worth the investment by the student and the investment in attending a class must be weighed against the opportunity cost of attending.

'The other students, they are aware of the ESOL class, but either because they have to do work outside, they do not have time.' (Yen, Interview:09.09.11)

The students in Yen's quote above saw working as more important and valuable than attending an ESOL class whereas Pauline's student, when told he would fail if he did not take the time to study, decided that passing the course was worth more than the money he would lose by not working. Motivation cannot be seen as a static characteristic of an individual student but should be seen, as Norton (Norton Peirce, 1995:20) argues, as an investment in a future identity which is in constant struggle between multiple subject positions, where the promise of tomorrow is offset by the opportunity costs of today (see section 2.5.2).

The 'ideal student' is a complex amalgam of positively valued characteristics which contribute to an identity which the lecturers appear to believe the students should strive for. In reality the 'ideal student' is a rarefied ideal at one end of a continuum with the poorest student imaginable at the other end: students move along the continuum and will occupy different continuum positions at different times. As the concept of the 'ideal student' is explored some of the educational expectations of student characteristics and behaviour become apparent. It is clear that staff perceive that students struggle to take charge of their own learning and that being at the centre of the learning requires students to have more organisational skills than some currently have. The pressure to work can have a negative impact on the quality of study both in terms of time and effort and this illustrates the conflict between the future identity that a student

aspires to and the opportunity cost in balancing current needs and identities (see section 2.5.2).

4.5 Educational Expectations

I had expected from the literature research (see section 2.3.1) to find differences in cultural educational expectations between first and second language speakers of English. The International Student Guide (Appendix:E) had a section entitled culture but instead of outlining the main points of Scottish/educational culture it detailed local museums and theatres. This lack of cultural awareness was also evident with the lecturers although two were aware that there could be some differences they said that it was difficult to notice unless they had knowledge of the culture:

‘.....I think maybe it [fitting in with others] is part of their culture not that I am highly knowledgeable...’ (Victor, Interview:03.04.09)

‘We have huge gaps about some of our students’ cultures.’
(Wallace, Interview:10.06.09)

For three others, there was a tendency to draw on cultural stereotypes:

‘I know there are cultural differences, for example like charging interest is not allowed in Muslim countries.’ (Tom, Interview:29.05.09)

'...in the West it's very individual achievement and in the East it's more a community and fitting in and value and the togetherness and the cohesion of that community, rather than as individuals.' (Rhona, Interview:17.04.09)

'...in his culture, basically, if you've got the money, then you can get the qualification.' (Pauline, Interview:19.05.09)

All cultures were potentially open to stereotyping, with Scottish educational culture described as student led and research based, in contrast with Eastern Europe which was described as teacher led. Understanding in the Scottish system was contrasted with memorisation in some East Asian countries (Pauline, Interview:19.05.09). The one person who had experience of living and studying in another culture, Yen, did comment that:

'...students from Asian cultures, they do not tend to be very active in class. They're very shy about asking questions, so sometimes when they're not quite sure, instead of telling the lecturer straight away, they tend to hide it.' (Yen, Interview:09.09.11)

Presumably since Yen is Chinese she was commenting from her personal experience, although not all experiences of Asian cultures will be the same. She gave no reason for the silence other than 'they are shy' nor did she indicate if this 'shyness' was seen from her experience of a British perspective. In contrast, Morita (2004:588),

explaining students keeping silent and being silenced in terms of identity, argues that the reasons for silence are not straightforward and for any given individual can vary from class to class. There is a danger of over generalisation in classifying a silent student as experiencing language or cultural problems but their silence may indeed be caused by other factors, for instance feeling insecure in their identity. If we label a silent student as shy then, like the term motivation, we are using the term in a psychological way giving it a status of a fixed personality trait instead of seeing the silence as the product of a sociocultural situation. Taking a sociocultural approach the challenge for the lecturer then becomes, as discussed in section 2.5.1, one of legitimising the students' peripheral participation (Morita, 2004:576; Lave & Wenger, 1991:29) to enable them to become, over time, a more active participant.

The lack of awareness reported by lecturers of cultural differences could be due to a lack of exposure to cultural diversity and, arguably, the small numbers of L2 students within the college could mean that these students were seen as individuals rather than as ethnic groups and so any differences were treated as differences between individuals rather than intercultural differences. In general, during the interviews, in total, 7 of the lecturers used some form of the word 'individual' 28 times when talking about students, which indicates that they did see students as individuals rather than in groups. However, the lecturers were interviewed about specific students and this may

have affected their responses: had I asked about L2 students in general I may have had different responses.

4.6 Peer Group Relationships

Students' lack of experience with the English language (and its Scottish inflections) was seen by the lecturers not just to impact on academic progress but was recognised as a barrier to integration with other students.

'Making relationships with other students can be difficult, not because other students are prejudiced but other students find communicating with them difficult..' (Pauline, Interview:19.05.09)

Despite what Pauline says, although there was not a great deal of evidence of overt prejudice, there was some (see below and also section 5.3). There also seemed to be some hesitation on the part of L2 students, to mix with their L1 counterparts. Lecturers reported that the Chinese students in particular tended to keep to their ethnic group and initially did not try to make friends with Scottish students commenting that students need to be prepared to put in the effort to make friends and to become actively involved in the social life of the college. The IDO did try to encourage them to do so and she reflected on her own experience of studying in Scotland:

'I don't think they understand the importance of having a Scottish friend. They tend to stay together ... and rely on

each other. And the only reason I understand why you need to have a Scottish friend, it's because I learned it from my own experience. [...] And yes, it's really beneficial' (Yen, Interview:09.09.11).

In general however the lecturers reported their impression that the L2 students eventually established friendships, whether with other second language students or with native students. Scottish students were considered by the lecturers to be generally friendly although there were some communication difficulties as reported above. However the relationships did not form instantly but slowly over time as barriers were broken down by getting to know other classmates.

'They have made some friends with the Scottish students, mainly with the students learning in the same class. It didn't happen straight away. It happened a few months after they had been studying here at our school' (Yen, Interview:09.09.11).

'It did take her a long time to be assimilated into the group' (Susan, Interview:22.05.09)

Despite issues in forming relationships the lecturers felt that the students were not passive recipients of any friendship that was available. A number of the L2 students appeared to make choices about how close they wanted to be to classmates.

'Bijon wasn't really bothered with the rest' (Pauline,
Interview:19.05.09)

'She doesn't interact much with them. She's very much in
[sic] her own friends and as far as the class goes,' (Rhona,
Interview:17.04.09)

Student relationships appeared to form along age and gender lines.
In a group which had students across a range of ages and genders
this still afforded choices for the students but when the group was
predominately one age or gender then choices were more limited.

'Dita tended to become associated with one other mature
student in the group' (Susan, Interview:22.05.09)

'she sits on the fringe of the more mature students because
she's a mature student'. (Tom, Interview:29.05.09)

Lecturers saw these relationships as very important because they
can form the basis of a mutual support system and they believed, for
the relationship to be worthwhile, it was important for the L2 students
to build alliances with L1 students who are capable of providing peer
support:

'she would sit beside somebody who, not to lean on, but
somebody who complemented her skills' (Pauline,
Interview:19.05.09)

Speaking about her former student Mirka, Pauline's comment 'not to lean on' shows that she did not want Mirka to be seen as someone who just took from others but had skills to offer in return. While there was recognition that the L2 students did have something to offer others, they were not always able to access the support they needed from their peers:

And it wasn't a good combination for Dita. I think it benefitted Linda I don't think it did [Dita]' (Susan, Interview:22.05.09)

Not all classrooms lent themselves to a great deal of choice in seating arrangements but some of the lecturers noticed that the second language students tended to be on the periphery of any groups and therefore were not always engaged with the other students in the particular group. Student exercise of choice was seen in a positive light by one lecturer:

'...but he has been quite clever because he is sort of physically in the middle but he is also kept ... make [sic] sure he is not actually in any one clique. ' (Victor, Interview:03.04.09)

But at other times it was seen negatively:

'So they're not really actively joined into that group.' (Yen, Interview:09.09.11).

'They physically sat on the fringes.' (Tom, Interview:29.05.09)

Not all lecturers noticed the seating pattern, and one lecturer thought the students integrated well in his class but he did go on to say that his classes were arranged in rows which would tend to illustrate a more individual working arrangement rather than group work. The lecturers seem regard the L1 students as welcoming and did not indicate that the exclusion was a deliberate act by them:

‘I think all class groups invite people in.’ (Wallace, Interview:10.06.09)

‘There will be some Scottish students who find talking to international students really hard. But luckily that does not apply to all the Scottish students...so some are still willing to be helpful.’ (Yen, Interview:09.09.11).

One particular student found it very difficult to integrate because most of the class were very much younger. Dita spoke with a pronounced Eastern European accent and her lecturers reported that this caused problems at first: Susan expressed her anger and frustration during the interview:

‘...and at some points you know I felt like slapping some of the younger students about the head you know because they’d snigger and tutter when Dita started speaking.’
(Susan, Interview:22.05.09)

This lecturer teaches that physical violence is not acceptable in childcare yet she used the language of violence to sum up her

frustrations and annoyance, showing how deeply she felt about how Dita was being treated by her classmates. Susan deliberately took action to make the other students work with Dita offering her legitimate participation in the class:

'I would split them up put them into group work and deliberately put Dita with a mixed group that she wouldn't normally sit with. And she was great at motivating them to complete tasks but she worked very, very hard to be accepted as part of the group and the group eventually got to the stage that Dita was part of them.' (Susan, Interview:22.05.09)

Once Dita had established that she possessed useful practical skills she integrated into the group for working relationships much more successfully although her social integration remained a problem.

In further education courses group work is encouraged and so it is important that students can work well in a group. Relationships in these circumstances can be extremely important (Norton, 2000:135).

As would be expected from the discussion in section 2.4.1 the L2 students did have issues integrating fully into social and working groups. While some lecturers tended to blame lack of integration on the local accent which was perceived as causing communication difficulties there was evidence of overt prejudice in at least one instance, although this was recognised by the lecturer who took

steps to ensure the student was given legitimate participation in the class.

4.7 Summary of Chapter 4

My research questions related to the issues L2 students experience in terms of their language competence, English language support, educational expectations, and relationships. It is clear that all the lecturers saw English language competence as being key to all these areas reporting examples of perceived deficits in language competence. Poor general English competence was implicated as a factor in the students' ability to not only access subject specific language but also language support and form beneficial relationships. For lecturers, this places lack of language competency at the centre of L2 students' problems from which all other problems stem. This allows the lecturers to believe that improving English will improve all other issues and so they subscribe to the 'myth of transience' (see section 2.1.3). To improve their English, students need English language support but this was something that lecturers felt unable to contribute to because, as Neil pointed out, it is not their subject specialism, as also the lack of time on which all the lecturers comment. The lecturers saw the ILC and the L2 students themselves as responsible for improving language competence, and recognising their unwillingness to engage with the ILC, (without questioning the appropriateness of the support given there), viewed the students simply as poorly motivated, hence compulsory English lessons were

considered as a solution. The key factor of time limitation meant that the lecturers could not support all students and so they looked for signs that the students were trying to help themselves and drew on an 'Educational Conversation' (see section 2.5.3) about the traits of an 'ideal student' to make these judgements about who deserved help. However, where contextualised support was given by the lecturers in the form of an academic writing class, and where expectations were made explicit, the IDO reported that 'real learning' was judged to have taken place.

The lecturers drew on and protected their own professional identity and status. As discussed in section 2.5.1 Gee (2005:29) argues that to be part of a Discourse people must not only say the right things but behave in expected ways. Neil discussed his worries that if the lecturers' remit was spread too widely their subject-knowledge would be called into question, while lecturers used subject specific vocabulary and course-related jargon and talked about their previous experience. Lecturers who had doubts about the success of their students engaged in recognition work, using these techniques to promote their professional identity. I have argued that this professional identity is not only bound to their knowledge and practice but also related to managerial demands, where they have to meet retention and achievement standards to justify public spending on education. This means that struggling students can reflect badly on their lecturers.

The 'ideal student' Conversation (section 2.5.3) illustrates the educational expectations that lecturers have of students: they are expected to have the traits of independence, good study skills, academic ability, and motivation. This is not a student identity as such but desirable traits and expectations illustrated in discussion of student behaviour and lecturers own memories as university students. While all the lecturers had some opinions on the traits that students should aspire to there was little awareness of possibly different cultural expectations. I have argued that one reason for this could be that they saw the L2 students as individuals rather than a homogeneous group, but it could also be that lecturers are so fixed on language competence being the main problem that they interpret any difficulties or misunderstandings as a language competence issue rather than a difference in cultural expectations.

Language competence was also seen to be at the heart of peer group relationships. There was evidence that the L2 students found it difficult to integrate: all but one of the lecturers who had noticed physical positioning in the classroom reported that the L2 students were at the periphery of working groups and not fully conversant in all that was being discussed, although one lecturer, Susan, took steps to break down the barriers caused by language and age by moving Dita around groups so that the L1 students could see the value of her contributions. As would be expected from the discussion in section 2.4.1, the L2 students appeared to find it difficult to interact

socially with L1 students although some students did form relationships with peers along age and gender lines.

The experience of the L2 students and their lecturers was examined through the lecturers' perspective which illustrated the interconnections between these experiences and how the working conditions of the lecturers, specifically their lack of time, affected not only their view of the students and therefore their relationships with them but also the support offered to them. These interconnections highlight the sociocultural nature of the college and the interplay of individuals' experiences.

Chapter 5: Students' Experiences

The case studies of five L2 students who speak English are explored in this chapter. All the students were full time and their profiles are outlined in Appendix H. All of the students were interviewed using semi-structured interviews but with a variety of success. Comments from lecturers are included where pertinent.

The case studies below have been organised to address the research questions and follow the same format for each student: name and background information, issues around English language competence, English language support, educational expectations and relationships with others. The use of semi-structured interviews (see Appendix E) introduced several structural themes which run through their stories but every student is an individual and each case study has a different balance of themes.

5.1 Bijon

5.1.1 Background

At the start of the research Bijon, aged 26 from Iran, lived with his Scottish girlfriend who was on the same course. He did not have any family members in Britain and progressed to Birmingham University to study accounting where he had friends acquired when he studied English there. Bijon had completed 3 of a 4 year degree course in electronic engineering in Iran. He was interviewed twice during the

research, once at the beginning of the 2007/2008 term and towards the middle of the 2008/2009 term.

In addition to studying Bijon worked on average 52 hours per week as a restaurant manager. Stating that he only studied when he was in college, he reported feeling tired and having no energy to attend appointments for extra support needing instead to work to pay his fees and expenses.

‘...I’ve got to work to afford paying my college fees and rent.’

(Bijon, Interview:23.10.07)

Bijon’s attendance fell below the 80% level required by the college (see Appendix D). Neil viewed this below average attendance as having a detrimental effect on his course work, working long hours was seen as a lack of commitment to the course which resulted in lower grades. One lecturer believed Bijon was only interested in gaining the qualification rather than knowledge.

5.1.2 Issues around language competence

Bijon’s spoken English was good with clear pronunciation and meaning. He appeared to understand the interview questions, rarely asked for clarification and answered questions appropriately. Bijon’s English competence affected his choice of course, studying Accounting rather than Electronic Engineering:

'Because first it's too hard for me to learn Electronic Engineering in English, and I have English difficulties. That's why I have chosen the easier subject at the moment.' (Bijon, Interview:23.10.07)

Although later in the same interview he said:

'The first month was, English was so hard for me. I understood all the course and task, but it was really hard to write them down. After some practice I'm getting better now, and I don't think I have any difficulties.' (Bijon, Interview:23.10.07)

The following year he reported that he was more confident using English and no longer had to translate everything but his course was more challenging than the previous one and he reflected on the issues and solutions.

'Yes, of course I do have a problem. Because, as you know, it's got terminology and some of the words which I never heard before. And I'm going to have to check on internet or get help for [this]...' (Bijon, Interview:29.01.09).

Bijon appeared to be image conscious and during his first course he may not have wished to admit that things were hard for him though he appeared aware of when he needed clarification and did seek help on occasions, putting him into Howell's (1982:31-32) 'conscious incompetent' category (section 2.2.1). He asked lecturers for support

but instead of this being seen as proactive it was viewed as trying to cut corners. I believe this is because of two incidents which happened early in his first course. Two referrals for cheating were submitted in the 2007/2008. In the first he copied his girlfriend's work during an in-class assessment and in the other, he and his girlfriend each submitted assignments that were identical in places, Bjorn having copied parts of his girlfriend's assignment. When asked about these incidents Bijon's lecturer said she did not remember the incidents but said she not surprised. These two incidents may have affected how Bijon was perceived throughout his time at the college. As discussed in section 4.2.1 both Neil and Pauline indicated that Bijon had a tendency to copy the work of others.

During his second interview Bijon spoke confidently about his writing feeling that he had improved and despite his course being more challenging than the previous year he was finding things easier

'Written assignments are easier than last year. Or I should say, I'm better than last year, I've been improved. It's not really easy but it's not something hard that I can't do that.'

(Bijon, Interview:29.01.09)

Here, Bijon's growing confidence as a student can be seen, there is no sign of the desperation and fear of failure that Pauline (section 4.2.1) believes can be at the root of plagiarism. Bijon assessed the standard of his work as average when compared to the rest of his

class due to his superior mathematical abilities. When asked if he was frustrated by his written work pulling down his grades he responded

‘No, because my self-confidence has been improved.’ (Bijon, Interview:29.01.09)

Bijon’s lecturers did not agree with his view and he was perceived as being in the lowest band of the class.

Bijon’s early incidents of plagiarism may have been caused by lack of confidence in his abilities and fear of failure but as his confidence in his abilities improved he became a student with a more realistic expectation of his abilities, although he appears not to have shaken off the stigma of the earlier incidents.

5.1.3 English as a second language support

Bijon was instructed to attend the ILC for support by his lecturers on numerous occasions and had indeed made appointments that he did not keep. When asked why, he replied:

‘I booked times to ... let’s be honest, because I didn’t have time. I was too lazy to come.’ (Bijon, Interview:29.01.09)

His answer that he was ‘too lazy’ to attend interviews seems to be brutally honest. This could be a mistranslation and it is debatable whether the equivalent expression ‘lazy’ in Farsi means something

closer to “didn’t have the energy”⁷. In British culture laziness is frowned upon and Bijon’s misuse of the word ‘lazy’ may have contributed to his lecturers’ image of him.

Time was an issue for Bijon because of his work. Support at the ILC had to take place in the students’ own time either on the days that they were not studying at college or free periods during college days:

‘Because outside of the college I don’t have enough time to study, and whatever I learn is whenever I come to college.’

(Bijon, Interview:29.01.09)

This sets the needs of Bijon as a student against the needs of Bijon as a worker. He had to make decisions about how to spend his time which was in short supply and in his case the need to work or rest was more important than the need for English support. The support offered by the ILC was not attractive enough to compete against the lost opportunity to rest or work: the opportunity costs of competing subject positions were too great and the support at the ILC was rejected.

Bijon did not criticise the support offered in the ILC saying that it had previously helped him and he occasionally used the centre to ask the meanings of technical words. Pauline mentioned more than once that

⁷ Consulted a Farsi speaker

Bijon would not use a dictionary and when asked he responded that he found it time consuming.

When asked directly if a proofreading service would be helpful he agreed it would be and, although he agreed that a summer school covering technical vocabulary for his subject would be useful, he responded:

'It would help, but I never thought about it myself to go and do it, because the only holiday I get from college is the summer. Besides, I have to work as well.' (Bijon, Interview:29.01.09).

Here Bijon does appear to say that he would rather be on holiday than access support and his attitude to helping himself, by asking someone else rather than using a dictionary and missing ILC appointments, appears to have contributed to an image of a poorly motivated student.

5.1.4 Expectations about educational practices

When asked about the differences between the Iranian and Scottish education systems, Bijon said that it was easier in Scotland because it was more practical with more group work. It should be noted that he was comparing an Iranian university to a Scottish FE College which is not a like-for-like comparison.

While Bijon claimed that his class tried to help each other his lecturers seem not to have observed this and he is perceived as taking support and not giving it.

5.1.5 Relationships with staff and students

On Bijon's first course 73% of the students were aged eighteen or below and at 26 there was only one other student (aged 25) who was close to his age. When talking about how he got on with his fellow classmates in the HNC Accounts course (who were older) Bijon looked back and compared them with the previous year's course:

'The students in the class are much older than the people who were at last year. They are pretty much older, we help each other, all of us, it's not that kiddy things.' (Bijon, Interview:29.01.09)

The word 'kiddy' would suggest that the behaviour and or interests of his classmates in 2007/2008 struck Bijon as immature and could be one possible reason why he appeared (to Pauline) to stand apart from them. Their immaturity delimited the peer learning/support or companionship that Bijon sought.

Tom suggested that in group work both Bijon and Katarzyna (who were on the same course) had difficulties in working within a group. They did not take part in discussions but it did not appear that they were deliberately excluded from the group. When asked directly, Bijon said that he had never experienced racism while at college.

While he may have remained distant from his classmates in his first year he reported in the second year that things were better and (as quoted above) that people tried to help each other. On being asked about group membership he replied

‘Yes, they are much better. I am part of ... I try to be part of groups and we have social life absolutely.’ (Bijon, Interview:29.01.09)

Bijon’s modification of ‘I am’ to ‘I try’ suggests that Tom’s observation about Bijon being on the fringe of groups was a reasonable one and could suggest that he desired full membership. Given how much of Bijon’s free time was taken up by work it is doubtful if he had much social life outside college but he was observed at lunch time sitting with other students.

5.1.6 Summary of section 5.1

It would appear that Bijon did not understand the educational expectations of the lecturers: for example, that he should try to help himself by using a dictionary, before asking others for help, which led to him being ascribed a negative identity by his lecturers. He was seen as someone who wanted a lot from others but did not want to work hard himself. While his early plagiarism may have coloured his lecturers’ opinions of him, he was also perceived as lacking commitment because his work demands resulted in poor class attendance and the failure to take up support which had been

arranged for him in the ILC. This negative identity limited his access to subject specific support.

Despite working long hours Bijon was always smart, polite and never appeared to be emotional or frustrated. He freely admitted he was tired but never appeared to be in a bad mood because of it. He tried to be part of groups but only ever managed to be on the fringes which limited his access to peer learning and support. These attributes, in the context of long work hours combined with college attendance, could suggest a conscientious young man who took care to be well presented and be respectful of others while working hard to achieve despite his disadvantages. However, this was not the image his lecturers shared.

5.2 Katarzyna

5.2.1 Background

Katarzyna, a Polish student, was 51 at the time of the interviews and studied HNC Accounting for one year. She was interviewed twice during the year: at the beginning of the academic year in 2008 and at the end in 2009. After having worked in a series of unskilled jobs since arriving in the UK she wished to become qualified to work in accounts in Scotland:

'I work it in Poland about 20 years ago I'd say. [...] And I decide to go to course for learn English like I've done so and

back my profession because I like the work.' (Katarzyna,
Interview:03.10.08)

She lived with a Scottish man who supported her financially: however Katarzyna had been used to being financially independent and did not like being dependent which affected her confidence:

'My friend is helping but I not want too much.'(Katarzyna,
Interview:03.10.08)

'I not like, I been all my life independent. First time I'm not.
And I feel not safe.' (Katarzyna, Interview:11.05.09)

Katarzyna had previously studied economics at University in Poland but it was not as interesting as she had hoped:

'...but it was communist time, very boring [...] and I resigned.'
(Katarzyna, Interview:03.10.08)

5.2.2 Issues around language competence

Katarzyna had been learning English for three years, two years part time and one year full time at college in England. In the second interview Katarzyna felt that her English had greatly improved and she spoke about her use of English at home:

'I'm reading a lot English, I'm reading on the internet news
and listening, I have no Polish television, only English.'
(Katarzyna, Interview:11.05.09)

She was immersed in English language having only one Polish friend (Dita) who was the same age but who lived in another town so they did not meet on a regular basis. She also used Skype to communicate with friends and family in Poland but she said that since she had started to use English most of the time everyday she had problems remembering Polish words:

‘...I’m thinking English language, and I couldn’t find Polish word.’ (Katarzyna, Interview:11.05.09)

Katarzyna recognised that she had problems with English competence and remarked that without her accounting experience she would have struggled on the course.

‘It’s always only problem if I should write, explain something English language. It’s always problem. [...] before I had contact with a company. If no I think I couldn’t study.’
(Katarzyna, Interview:11.05.09)

She reported problems understanding the lecturer in class:

‘The only problem at college is new words and when teacher speaking, saying something too fast for me. So I’m asking person near what I do not understand – could you explain me what he said?’ (Katarzyna, Interview:03.10.08)

In addition to asking fellow students for explanations she used dictionaries and a translator on her laptop which not only gave a

translation but read the word aloud so she could hear the pronunciation.

Despite plenty of opportunity to use English Katarzyna was not fluent and could be difficult to understand. She reported problems interpreting the questions in assignments but preferred to ask classmates for guidance instead of her lecturers:

‘...because I didn’t understand question sometimes. And I’m lucky because people are friends, it’s another student I’m asking always for explain me.’ (Katarzyna, Interview:11.05.09)

Katarzyna spoke about difficulties with new vocabulary and this confirms Neil’s comment (Interview:21.05.09), who identified that specialist terms were a problem for students particularly when they mean something completely different in everyday English.

By the second interview her confidence in her writing had increased despite reporting problems caused by the difference between spoken and written English. She had discovered that English grammar was, for a while, not taught explicitly in school and favourably compared her spelling and grammar to that of L1 students.

‘Because, I don’t know if true or no, my friend said they never had grammatic [grammar] at school here. [...] Sometimes my spelling was better, even better.’ (Katarzyna, Interview:11.05.09)

However Katarzyna's optimism about her writing abilities was not shared by her lecturer Neil who considered that her writing was poor even in relation to the poorer L1 speakers in the class. Katarzyna appears to be an 'unconscious incompetent' (Howell, 1982:31-32), unaware of her problems. This is in part caused by the people she compared herself with. She did not have access to the work of all her classmates and was supported by an older female student in her class who was an adult returner who sought support in the ILC for poor writing skills. It is possible that when Katarzyna compared herself to others she was comparing herself to the weakest students in the class giving her an unrealistic view of her abilities.

5.2.3 English as a second language support

A student's perceived need for support is relative to both the level of course they are doing and the standard of other students on the course. Katarzyna's view of her skills coloured her perception of English language support, on the one hand she appreciated that she had difficulties writing but on the other hand she thought that her spelling and grammar were comparable to other members of the class and so were acceptable: grammar not being assessed in assignments could have confirmed this view. In common with other students she did not value the grammar lessons which were offered by the ILC and so did not attend support classes. She did not receive support at home and commented:

'So I'm at home, I'm alone.' (Katarzyna, Interview:11.05.09).

As discussed above Katarzyna supported herself by using dictionaries and the internet. When asked what support the college should offer she suggested that the library was too noisy, the air-conditioning was at times too cold and the college should give more financial support to students which suggests a lack of understanding of a) the interview question and/or b) an awareness of her support needs.

5.2.4 Expectations about educational practices

The only difference Katarzyna highlighted between the education systems of Poland and Scotland was the distance between staff and students. She reported that Polish staff were more powerful which dissuaded students from questioning lecturers and giving their opinions.

‘...in Poland is bigger distance with student and teacher.

Teacher... teacher in Poland will be like big boss. It's not nice, it's not nice because it's too big a distance and the students afraid to say what they think.’ (Katarzyna,

Interview:03.10.08)

She stated she liked the more open culture in a Scottish classroom but despite this Katarzyna was unable to tell the temporary lecturer (Tom) that she could not hear him. She said she did not want to upset him and felt that to do so would put her at a disadvantage. When asked she said she felt that she would

have been able to tell a Polish lecturer that she could not hear him so this would suggest that her observations about Scottish lecturers did not apply in all cases. In general she felt comfortable and safe with most of her lecturers that she had time to build a relationship with but she did not feel a connection with Tom, who seemed less approachable:

‘It’s difficult, for me it’s difficult always ask for help. If someone didn’t smile in me and I am talking with him, I never ask.’ (Katarzyna, Interview:11.05.09)

5.2.5 Relationships with staff and students

Katarzyna claimed to get on with everyone in her class and that everyone was helpful but as she was a lot older than most of her class she could not access all her classmates and had to rely on a particular student.

‘I’m trying to sit near, near a woman my own age because they understand me better. Younger people are different. They are happy with me but I found it’s more difficult for learning because if they not want they couldn’t say me “I have no time.” Or something like that.’ (Katarzyna, Interview:03.10.08)

Katarzyna used her classmates for support but according to her lecturer she over used this which may account for some classmates’ reluctance to help her.

'Katarzyna in particular, could be quite demanding. Not of me, but of her fellow students. And there were times when they were obviously being held back.' (Neil, Interview:21.05.09)

Her limited ability to access other students in the class was crucial to shaping Katarzyna's experience of the college. As discussed in the section above she could not compare her work to a wide range of students and thought her English was better than it was. She could not access peer learning and support from those in the best position to give it and had to rely on a woman who needed support herself. Despite having experience of working in accounting Katarzyna was seen as demanding, which would indicate that, while she asked for help, she did not give it, so (as discussed in section 4.6) she sat on the fringes of group work with limited participation.

5.2.6 Summary of section 5.2

Katarzyna struggled in many aspects of her course and while achieving her HNC did not progress to the HND. Her work experience in Poland meant that she had an understanding of the computational side of accounts but she did not perform well in written reports. Katarzyna's relationships with staff and students were major influences on her college experience. Despite claiming that lecturers were friendly and accessible she did not ask them for help and could not ask one to speak louder. She leant heavily on her fellow students but, apparently unable to reciprocate, was not always given the help

she required from them. This restricted her access to peer support and she relied on one particular student of a similar age who also received support from the ILC. Katarzyna was not able to judge whether the support received from this student was good quality support or not. Equally she was not familiar enough with good writing to be able to judge the relative quality of her own. Katarzyna's belief that grammar was unimportant was supported because friends told her that they did not study grammar at school and she did not lose marks in her assignment for poor surface features of grammar and spelling as long as her meaning was clear. The lack of emphasis on grammar led Katarzyna to believe that it was not important and she did not value the support offered in the ILC and did not attend support sessions.

5.3 Dita

5.3.1. Background

Like Katarzyna, Dita was also Polish aged 51 years at the start of the research. A university graduate in Theatre Management she was divorced and had come to Scotland on her own leaving her 22 year old daughter in Poland to continue her university education. She lived with an Englishman living in Scotland.

Since arriving in Scotland she had worked in low skilled jobs before deciding to return to education to give herself the qualifications for a new career. While she was at college she did not work but, at the

time of the interview, was considering getting a part time job. She did not feel that she had had to give anything up to come to college although money was an issue.

‘Of course I have little bit problem with money now, because I don’t have enough money and just I thought that I should just always study but I am not sure now. Maybe I should just get a little bar job...’ (Dita, Interview:24.10.08)

Her course choice of childcare was a complete change in career although as a mother she already had experience of childcare. She reported that the childcare course was her first choice and she had chosen childcare because it would give her an opportunity to make a difference to children.

‘Because I always thought about just to work with kids, because I believe that we, I can influence a child’s future, you know? [...] When children they are actually young you can just, oh my God, just nurture them?’ (Dita, Interview:24.10.08)

5.3.2 Issues around language competence

Dita did not speak English before arriving in the UK as she had studied French as a foreign language at school. She had only been learning English for three years and attributed language learning to her partner.

'I have partner, he is English, he's not even Scottish, he's English and he actually taught me to...language' (Dita, Interview:24.10.08)

Despite having only spoken English for three years Dita was immersed in English and while not fluent, she was understandable and seemed to have an adequate range of vocabulary. She reported struggling with the local accent:

'I can only listen, and this is very difficult for me, because this Scottish accent!' (Dita, Interview:24.10.08)

She did have problems understanding others but seemed able to cope with these problems:

'....I have problem with language. I actually have, I had a situation today, but I wasn't panic because I didn't understand questions...' (Dita, Interview:24.10.08)

Despite struggling with the local accent Dita had the confidence to ask for clarification. She appeared to have a positive self image that allowed her to seek further help without worrying that this would reflect badly upon her:

'They [lecturers] just explain me the necessary and just for me, it's the best when they write.' (Dita, Interview:24.10.08)

Dita's confidence in asking for help and clarification was confirmed by her lecturer who commented that Dita frequently asked for clarification.

Dita was in a similar domestic situation to Katarzyna but she made faster progress in learning the language. Her willingness to seek clarification and correction from lecturers played a large part in this. She also used an electronic-dictionary in class and her lecturer gave her time to use it. This meant that Dita did not miss out on the next part of the class while using the dictionary.

Dita did bring in an assignment to talk about but unfortunately the digital recorder failed and most of the data was lost. While I was surprised by how little feedback was written on the assignment, she was not. One of the comments was that she should have written more personally. When asked why she did not do this she explained that the English language was not for her a good language to explain feelings.

'There isn't the words in English to say how I feel. In English you love everything. You love someone, love food eh love everything. In Polish there are many words. In English not enough.' (Dita, Interview:23.01.09)

Dita used the facilities of the ILC as a proofreading service and one of the tutors there went over her essay with her, changing the English

into a more grammatically standard form. When asked how the assignment would be different if she wrote it in Polish she replied:

‘There would be more of me, my feelings.’ (Dita, Interview: 23.01.09)

Asked if the lack of emotional words in English meant that she could not express herself she replied.

‘Yes, I can’t ... I don’t say how I feel.’ (Dita, Interview: 23.01.09)

Dita went on to explain that, for her, nouns in Polish had the power to conjure the essence of the thing it named. She used the example of river to explain that the Polish word for river evoked the characteristics of the river but the English equivalent did not do that for her.

Despite Dita’s misgivings about her written work her lecturer felt that she was of a good enough standard for the course and was indeed better than her peers. This comparison shows that it can be difficult to make generalisations about the written work of L1 and L2 writers as issues such as maturity, academic experience and personal qualities can affect the quality of writing.

5.3.3 English as a second language support

Dita did not have the opportunity to develop profitable relationships with classmates who could support her studies. As the most skilled

member of the class in terms of study skills, she provided support and encouragement to the class and her lecturers saw her as a positive influence. The lecturer presented an image of Dita as a woman who was actively in control of her learning, analysing her needs, checking her understanding and seeking clarification: someone who is 'consciously competent' (Howell, 1982:31-32).

Her main form of support was to seek clarification from lecturers when she was unsure of anything. Dita took full responsibility for her learning experiences and appears to have chosen the support that suited her best. While she did use the services of the ILC for proofreading she did not attend any English grammar support sessions preferring to make specific requests for areas that she had identified. When her work was being proofread she sat with the member of staff and discussed what was meant, the member of staff would then rephrase any areas as required. During this time the reasons why the rephrasing was necessary were explained so the proofreading sessions were also instructional. This shows that support can be successful if the student takes control of the support sessions and can identify what they need.

5.3.4 Expectations about educational practices

When comparing Scottish education with Polish education, like Bijon, Dita was not comparing like-for-like as there is a difference in emphasis between university and further education in any country. She naturally found further education easier than University. Further

education has a more practical emphasis, in contrast to the theoretical orientation of many University degrees.

'For me it's ... maybe it was many years ago why I don't think of it with many changes now, but in Poland it's just – here it's easier to study, it's more just very more helpful.

Just with more play, you know? This is not intellectual only.

In Poland it's very intellectual. You are just ... must ... just remember everything. This is different'. (Dita,

Interview:24.10.08)

Later in the same interview she commented on the difference in relationships with Scottish and Polish lecturers. She confirmed Katarzyna's viewpoint that there is a greater distance between students and lecturers in Poland than in Scotland.

'That...you know, just teachers more cared about how I feel in school. Do you make any progress? Do you have any problems? They actually care about us. It's not happen in Poland like that. Nobody ask you "How are you feeling?" or "What I can do for you?" yes, but "Do you feel better?" and you just learn better'. (Dita, Interview:24.10.08)

But the difference in relationships within the classroom was not always viewed positively by Dita. Her lecturer, Susan, said that at first Dita had found the students quite rude (Susan, Interview:22.05.09).

Dita was considered to be a good student mainly because she had many of the attributes of the 'ideal student' (section 4.4.2). She sought clarification when she did not understand, was intelligent and well educated in her own language and took responsibility for her own learning.

5.3.5 Relationships with staff and students

There was a large age gap between Dita and the others, the majority of whom were under twenty. Like Martina in Norton's research (2000:99) it appears Dita took power for herself from a domestic context as someone old enough to be the mother of the other students in order to gain legitimate participation in the class.

'Very well, I just think, unfortunately it's, it's difficult to make contact with, I can say kids because I am over 50 and they can be my daughters, yes! [...] I can really see, let's talk about everything but they are very, very nice to me, very kind, I feel good, I feel good. [...] It, I think it is actually good about this, because I feel younger with them but I miss contact with older people, yes, yes.' (Dita, Interview:24.10.08)

Dita missed conversations with older people and she found the conversations of the younger girls limited to relationships and television. They did not satisfy her need to talk about current affairs and politics. To give her contact with someone of her own age, Dita

was introduced to Katarzyna. They were the same age so they struck up a friendship which on anecdotal observation seems to satisfy them both socially although it did not seem to provide Katarzyna with a higher achieving comparative reference point perhaps because the relationship was conducted in Polish.

There was one other mature student in Dita's class and, although they sat beside each other in class, according to Susan (see section 4.6) the relationship brought no benefit to Dita. While Dita reported that the students had been very nice to her, her lecturer (see section 4.6) reported that initially there were issues of students giggling at Dita's accent, presumably because of the native students' immaturity and lack of experience of the wider world.

Dita made no mention of this but as discussed above she had commented to her lecturer that she thought the younger students rude showing that she was aware of the sniggering. Because of her self-confidence she dismissed this as the students being rude, seeing the students' behaviour as the problem rather than her accent. Morita (2004) argues that students can be silenced in the class by other students (section 2.1.3) and sniggering of this nature could have depleted the confidence of a person who was less secure in their identity than Dita. The lecturer's image of Dita was very positive and she took steps to integrate Dita with her class, being confident that Dita could prove her worth in a group, so placed her with people she would not normally work with. Despite initial

resistance by the students, Dita reported that she did manage to become assimilated into the course but she had to work hard to and prove her worth. She had a lot to offer the group as a mature graduate because she had skills and an intellectual capacity that her fellow school leaver students had yet to reach. She was one of the strongest students on her course (See Appendix D) but she still had to struggle to establish the identity of a mature intelligent student against her fellow students' perception of her as a foreigner with a strong accent. It was a struggle she eventually won, with the help of her lecturer.

5.3.6 Summary of section 5.3

Dita had positive subject positions as mother and graduate, from which to develop a positive identity which was recognised and reinforced by her lecturers who saw her as a hard working self motivated student investing in her future. Her lecturer Susan viewed Dita as a positive influence in the classroom not only as a good student but someone who made a valuable contribution to the experience of other students. Susan supported her full participation in the class and it was recognised that she had a lot to bring to class discussions and group work.

However despite all that Dita could bring to the class she still struggled to be accepted by the young people and the only other older person in the class could not offer any support. Dita's own self confidence allowed her to access the support she needed from her

lecturers and the ILC but she was unusual in this respect. Because she knew what support she needed and was confident enough to request it, she was able to get access to what she needed.

Despite her high motivation and the investment of two years at college Dita did not continue with her studies after the second year but left having been offered a job in call centre sales. The job not only offered her a good salary but was at a level where she had responsibility and her skills were recognised. Perhaps the need to make a difference to children was not as important as the need to be recognised as a competent professional and the ability to earn a good wage.

5.4 Amy

5.4.1 Background

Amy, from Hong Kong, joined the college in 2008 at the age of 18 and studied for two years before leaving in the summer of 2010. Enrolled onto her first choice of courses her attendance was above average for both (see Appendix D) and in her first year at college Amy successfully completed all but two of her modules which she withdrew from. However in her second year she failed three modules including the work experience.

Amy lived at home with her family and worked in the family restaurant in the evenings. She was interviewed three times once in 2009, and twice in 2010. She was difficult to interview, speaking very quietly

and sometimes responding with a nod or a shake of the head rather than with words: answers when given were often one word.

5.4.2 Issues around language competence

At the time of the first interview Amy reported that she had been learning English for approximately seven years: as a second language at school in China and with local council English classes in Scotland. Cantonese was spoken at home although occasionally she used English with her siblings and always used English with customers at work.

When speaking English, Amy missed words out of sentences and spoke in short phrases but was nevertheless coherent and understandable. Amy reported difficulties in understanding spoken English:

‘Yes, speaking too fast eh, [...] I don’t understand the words.’

(Amy, Interview:15.04.09)

These comprehension problems were reported a year later:

‘Sometimes I find the English very difficult when communicating with people because sometimes I don’t understand what they are talking about and I don’t know how to reply to them.’ (Amy, Interview:22.04.10)

In her first interview in 2009 Amy reported that she employed a number of strategies to aid understanding including using a

dictionary and asking friends for more explanations but she did not ask for clarification or help from her lecturers. When asked if she asked for help when she did not understand she said:

‘No, I just go to home and get a dictionary.’ (Amy, 15.04.09)

By doing this instead of asking for explanations from her tutors she presented an image of herself as a capable student who understood but could not express herself and although Amy’s language competence was a concern, her lecturers tended to classify it as a lack of ability to communicate (production skills) rather than a lack of understanding (reception skills) (see section 4.2). Amy said that she had asked Rhona for advice about her inability to express herself and reported that Rhona’s recommendation was that she should either take a year out before attempting the National Certificate (NC) to concentrate on improving her English or that she should attempt the NC over two years. This advice was not welcomed by Amy who did not want to extend her study time. Amy seeking advice from her lecturer echoes a student in Morita’s (2004:588) study. On that occasion that student was reassured and encouraged to contribute thus legitimising her participation. In contrast the advice given to Amy to improve her English is not encouraging and may have reduced her legitimate participation and dissuaded her from asking for help again.

Despite not asking lecturers for help she was prepared to ask for help from others. Her friends in the class tried to explain the course content to her after class: however it was not clear if this was a regular or irregular event.

‘...after... finish the class for me they talking about for me the course today.’ (Amy, Interview:15.04.09)

It would appear that the power relationship between Amy and her lecturers was preventing her from making her needs known (Morita, 2004; Norton, 2000). As already discussed in section 4.4.2 lecturers value students who seek clarification but, over time, Amy did not become comfortable asking for clarification and by her second year when asked what she did when she did not understand her she replied:

‘I normally just sitting and listening.’ (Amy, Interview:22.04.10).

Amy’s issues with English language competence affected her class contribution. The inability to take part in group discussions was a cause for concern not only for Amy’s sake but for the lost opportunity to discuss differences in childrearing culture within the class. Amy therefore failed to match up to the ‘ideal student’ (see section 4.4.2) who adds to knowledge as well as taking from it. Class contribution was valued by the childcare lecturers Rhona and Susan as it promoted peer learning and a student who would not contribute to a

discussion did not help her peers. However, there was sympathy for Amy's reluctance to contribute and her Rhona commented that she would not force Amy to speak or give a presentation.

Lack of expectation could also have contributed to Amy's silence. When a person has to use a second language irrespective of the mistakes they make their confidence to use it usually increases when they realise that they can be understood (Morita, 2004:588; Norton, 2000:96). By not expecting Amy to do all the things expected of everyone else such as presentations or contributing in class then the lecturer may have, unwittingly, kept Amy at the periphery of the class (Lave & Wenger, 1991:29) contributing to her silence.

Amy's issues with language competence were not restricted to spoken English: her written English was also a cause for concern. Amy's lack of vocabulary was also reflected in her written work

'To do the report need too many words for that.' (Amy,
Interview:15.04.09)

As discussed in section 4.2, in her first year Amy could submit her answers to questions in bullet points instead of full answers but in her second year Amy needed to be able to write an academic essay

She brought in an assignment to be discussed as part of this research. She received positive feedback but had lost marks because of her use of bullet-points instead of sentences and because she could not name five terms correctly. Her spelling and

grammar had also been commented on but it was not the focus of the feedback.

When asked about the assignment question Amy said that although she felt she understood the question, her technique to answer the question was to write the assignment in Chinese and then translate it into English using an electronic translator or Google. She was aware that the word order in Chinese was different from English and she commented that she had to turn it around

‘No because Chinese to English is always differing, example – I’m very happy but in the Chinese it’s the other way – happy am I.’ (Amy, Interview:13.05.10)

Despite Amy being aware of this fact, she consistently had words in the wrong order in her written work. There were also words that she could not translate so she left them out. Despite being able to do the English grammar exercises she was given, Amy could not look at an English passage and decide if the words were in the correct order.

An issue with electronically translating into English an academic essay written in the first language is that inappropriate words may be used for the specialised academic context and the intended meaning is lost. Translations need to be checked carefully by someone who understands not only the language that the passage is being translated into but also the subject matter, but when asked if anyone checked the translations for her Amy replied that she did not have

time. Amy was not given extra time to complete her assignments so had to complete her work in the same time frame as L1 students. Although reporting to be satisfied with the translations she did not have a good enough competence in English to know if they were a good translation or not. To be able to use these translators the person must ironically be a competent user of the language that the passage is being translated into and Amy did not fall into that category.

5.4.3 English as a second language support

In 2008/2009 Amy attended the ILC to get help with reading children's stories but, in 2009/2010, attended only one of the recommended weekly ILC language support sessions. On that occasion she was dismissive of the grammar exercises offered because she had already worked her way through that series of English language text books and felt that she had nothing more to learn from this approach. She could complete grammar exercises to a high standard but was unable to transfer this knowledge to her everyday English language. Her perception was that the grammar lessons did not meet her needs. This is consistent with Norton's (1997:143) theory of investment as discussed in section 2.1.1 and is a recognition of grammar competence being a poor indicator of language competence. However, when asked if there was any other support that could be offered by the college, in 2009 she offered no suggestions but by 2010 she replied:

'I think maybe get the English: teachings of the language teacher come here to help them [L2 students].' (Amy, Interview:22.04.10).

This would indicate that an interpretation of grammar lessons being inappropriate was too simplistic. Amy did not recognise the one-to-one support from the ILC as the kind of English lessons she wanted: an English class with a language teacher which would also suggest that she did not recognise the ILC staff as teachers perhaps because of their status with the college as support rather than academic staff.

Amy recognised her issues around English language competence which positioned her as a 'conscious incompetent' (Howell, 1982:31-32) and towards the end of her second course, when it was apparent that she was in danger of failing; Amy indicated that she had returned to the local council for English lessons.

During her second year Amy was brought to the ILC by Rhona for English support for one of her essays. This particular assessment is noteworthy because it highlights expectations of English language support. The standard of English of this essay was judged to be too poor for the assignment to be corrected. The words were not in the correct order and while the spelling was good the grammatical constructions made the work difficult to understand. Rhona requested that someone 'help her write it in English.' (ILC Observation: March 2010)

The corrections took a number of hours to complete and were completed over two sessions. During the time between the sessions Amy had recruited the help of a cousin who she said had a good command of English. The work was resubmitted but the follow week the lecturer returned to the ILC with Amy and the assignment. This time Rhona could not mark it because she could see it was the work of three different people, pointing to passages that I had helped Amy write. I explained to the lecturer that I had not written these passages in terms of their content and that I had only done as I had been asked to do which was to correct the English. I was told that the assignment needed to be the student's own work. This leads to questions of how much help is too much. On the one hand the lecturer wanted good academic English and asks for support for this to happen but on the other hand the lecturer wants the writing to be all the student's own work. Clearly there is a gulf between what is expected to be achieved and what can be achieved over a given period of time.

5.4.4 Expectations about educational practices

Educated at school in Hong Kong Amy was not making a like-for-like comparison with the college but when asked to compare her experiences of the two she said that it was easier in Hong Kong because of the language and that she got more homework there, which she preferred. When questioned about different cultural expectations she had not noticed any differences. However, because

of poor language comprehension, she may not have been aware of the expectations of the class.

5.4.5 Relationships with staff and students

Amy was a part of a small group. Outside of class time she could often be seen around the college with some other students from her class. The group comprised young females who were sixteen to eighteen years old. When asked how she got on with her classmates she reported:

‘They help me a lot...’ (Amy, Interview:15.04.09)

However her tutor saw things differently when asked how Amy got on with her class she described Amy as being part of a small group but not interacting with the rest of the class. This lack of interaction with her class was not interpreted by the lecturer as a result of lack of confidence. It appeared to Rhona that Amy chose her friends carefully, ones who reflected her personality and could fulfil her support needs. Amy’s interaction with her classmates appears to be an area of discrepancy of perceptions. On the one hand Amy reports good relationships with her class while Rhona reports good relationships with a few select classmates. I believe that this apparent discrepancy shows a lot about Amy’s attitude and focus. When she replied that her classmates were helpful she was only considering those classmates with whom she had a good relationship and did not consider the others. This, along with Amy selecting

friends who would be useful to her shows her focus on being successful. Amy took control of her relationships, choosing those which would help her and disregarding those who would not.

5.4.6 Summary of section 5.4

Amy's educational experience revolved around her English language competence. She lacked the vocabulary to be actively involved in her class and produce essays to the required standards. Her lack of contribution in the classroom was interpreted by her lecturer as lack of ability to articulate rather than lack of understanding and she perpetuated this image by not asking for clarification possibly owing to being discouraged on the one occasion she had asked for advice. A major factor in this behaviour could be because she did not want to have to spend a second year on the course.

For Amy, the type of English lesson which was on offer in the ILC was not a good investment of her time and effort. She recognised that the de-contextualised grammar lessons were not appropriate and so she rejected them but she did recognise that she had issues around English language competence and did want to attend English classes run by an English language teacher.

In her first year, special assessment arrangements were made to help Amy but this appears not to have been beneficial over the long term as she did not develop the required academic writing skills. It was only at the point when failure was apparent that she returned to

English lessons provided by the local council. There was a discrepancy over what support for academic English writing can be provided with the lecturer asking for an essay to be put in academic English but still requiring the writing to be entirely the student's own work. This highlights the conflicting institutional demands when a student has poor writing-skills and needs a lot of guidance to write in a grammatically correct and contextually appropriate form.

Despite her poor language competence Amy was able to make a small number of friends with people who were prepared to support her, although there were others in the class with whom she had minimal contact. She did not notice any significant intercultural differences within the classroom although again her language competence may have meant that she did not understand what was required of her. She did not contribute to discussions of cultural child rearing practices despite there being an expectation that students should contribute to classroom discussion. Rhona, her lecturer, did not want to push Amy to contribute and this may have diminished Amy's confidence, contributing to her silence and marginal participation in the classroom.

5.5 Gagan

5.5.1. Background

Gagan, from Nepal, was 18 years at the start of the research. He lived with his family and a sponsor who worked as an academic. The

sponsor paid all Gagan's college and living expenses and employed his family to work on the sponsor's estate. Gagan's spoke warmly of his sponsor and said that the relationship between the families was more than a working relationship reporting:

'We are like as a joint family now. [...] Also my, all my family are here because we've got a really long history basically and we've got English big family as well so we're all in the same place living together....' (Gagan, Interview:23.01.09)

Although he had been in Scotland for two extended holidays of six months each, Gagan had only permanently been in Scotland for one year before attending the college. He did not go to school during that year.

'Here. Now I done just nothing. I did work like we've got like a big garden or my sponsor had a big garden so I just hang around and look after them and helping.' (Gagan, Interview:23.01.09)

Gagan started to learn English at secondary school in Kathmandu and had been intermittently learning English both formally and informally for approximately eight years before attending the college.

5.5.2 Issues around language competence

Because of Gagan's family background he had the opportunity to speak English:

'And I'm also living with quite a big English family so I always have to talk English and so it always makes me quite good.'

(Gagan, Interview:11.05.09)

Although Gagan's spoken English had many errors his meaning was clear but he reported that he found the students difficult to understand because they spoke too fast, On the other hand, he found his lecturer (who had a middle class southern English accent) was easy to understand:

'And just the problem is like when, sometimes like people here tell you in a friendly style like quite... some like sort of be really fast. That time I don't really understand what... At the moment my teacher is quite like he's not that... his style... in that his style is quite comfortable.' (Gagan, Interview:11.05.09)

Despite having difficulty understanding students Gagan did not feel that he needed any language or other support and said his writing was not causing him concern. His Art and Design course was less language orientated and while there was some reading and writing most of the work took place in the art studio, However, Gagan's optimism about his language was not shared by his lecturer. Like

Amy's lecturer, Victor (Interview:03.04.09) believed that Gagan's problem with English was more to do with production rather than reception or understanding although his comments related to interactional style rather than formal linguistic competence. He commented that Gagan's understanding was good but while he did not initiate conversations he did manage to ask for what he needed. Victor said that Gagan tried to be involved in classroom discussions albeit in a small way with short responses but he did not ask for clarification during discussion.

In the second year of his course Gagan did have to do some writing. He however could rely on the support of his extended family to proof read his work.

'Yes I do ask my family members to check but like what I do is they ask me or if say I'm writing I put exactly what I want to write on the essay and then if something, grammar mistakes then they tell me to correct it. It's like "This one is wrong you need to do like this and not put it like that." They explain me stuff.' (Gagan, Interview:11.05.09)

This support was effective because Gagan's writing was rated positively by his lecturer. Art and Design was the only subject which did not have a communication module within the course so the only writing Gagan had to do was the writing set by the Art and Design lecturers.

He recognised that this support was of great importance for him and that he would struggle without it. In response to my question on support he agreed that students, who did not have the benefit of the extensive family support that he had, would need some additional support at college.

‘Yes definitely because yes if I’m on my own then I do need help’. (Gagan, Interview:11.05.09)

5.5.3 English as a second language support

Gagan had good opportunities to practice English and received help with his written English from people who were used to writing in academic English so he did not need to use the ILC for English language support either for grammar or for proof reading. Because Gagan was able to access high quality support his written assignments were of a good standard. From Gagan’s description of the support given to him it would appear that his writing was not just corrected but he also received explanations of why the correction should be made so this would have helped him to improve as a writer in English and present assignments which may initially have been of better quality than he could have otherwise produced himself. His lecturer said that the Art department had made the decision to correct grammar and spelling but did not need to correct Gagan’s work in this respect. However, as these features were not awarded marks this did not affect the grades, indicating that the discipline of Art and Design communication which does not rely on language to

express ideas did not place the same value on written language as other disciplines. This could have encouraged Gagan to feel better about his English than he perhaps should have. However since no-one ever saw his own, unsupported, writing then it is difficult to know how much support he needed.

5.5.4 Expectations about Educational Practices

Gagan appeared to be a likeable, friendly, intelligent young man and although he was quiet he had a self-confident air. Victor his lecturer was very positive about him and attributed a positive identity to him seeing him as a good student with positive characteristics, for example being observant. Like Dita, Gagan also had a positive self-image and was not afraid to seek out clarification where necessary and this was considered as a positive attribute by the lecturers.

Gagan left secondary school at sixteen years old and when asked about the differences between educational practice in Nepal and Scotland (as in the other case studies he is not comparing like-for-like) he answered:

‘Yes here’s different because I think what here is like quite free I mean like well I quite like it but everyone got chance to talk here in class quite free like but in Nepal we’d like once like teacher enter in class no one allowed to make any noise, any stuff and just talk what the subject-matter is and he start.

But I feel slightly more free than there.' (Gagan,
Interview:23.01.09)

This freedom in the classroom led to a noisy class and Gagan commented that sometimes the noise was too much for him and hindered his understanding. However, having mentioned this to his lecturer, it was dealt with by Victor, who had a class discussion and the problem was at least partially resolved to Gagan's satisfaction.

'I don't, quite more free is kind of like distracting like attentions so like everyone when everyone makes noise and stuff then I can't really understand what the teacher says. And it will be like, be good if little bit more control round this but we talked about it last week and it was calming down. So it's good'. (Gagan, Interview:23.01.09)

He was studying Art and Design and said that this was his first choice. Gagan did not study art in school in Nepal:

'I didn't used to do it in Nepal because I didn't have any art teacher in Nepal.' (Gagan, Interview:11.05.09)

One area that Gagan did find difficult was History of Art because the history he learnt about was European history. He had not heard of the artists studied before so it was all new to him whereas an art student from the UK is very likely to have had some contact with European art during their time at school.

'I'm like told you, from Nepal. So I haven't really studied all of them before that's why I need to study all of them now so'.

(Gagan, Interview:11.05.09)

5.5.5 Relationships with staff and students

Gagan reported that he got on well with his classmates but did not have a particular friend. He did not appear to be part of a group in and around the college and he was often on his own but this did not seem to be a problem for Gagan.

Gagan's lecturer also agreed that the relationship between Gagan and his peers was good but, while they were friendly, he did not classify the classmates as friends to Gagan. He was positioned in the middle of class but Victor commented that there was no space in the studio to be alone.

5.5.6 Summary of section 5.5

As an Art and Design student Gagan was less dependent on his language skills for success than the other case study students and he was able to demonstrate his subject skills without so much need for language. He stated that he was comfortable with his level of English but he was aware of his needs because he sought and received help from his host family who, by his own account, instructed him on how his assignments should be written. This would suggest that Gagan was a 'conscious incompetent' (Howell, 1982:32)

(see section 2.2.1) because he was aware of his shortcomings and took steps to address them.

It would appear that language did not have as high a value placed upon it in the Art and Design courses in comparison to other college disciplines (Zamel, 2004:6) as it was the only department which did not have a compulsory language component. On the other hand, Gagan's understanding in the classroom was judged positively and he made short contributions to classroom discussions.

According to my observations, Gagan appeared very much as a solitary figure in college who did not appear to spend time with his classmates at break time, often instead using the computing facilities in the ILC to access emails, do independent research or access other internet sites. He did not, however, appear to be lonely or unhappy. Gagan admitted that he struggled to understand the other students who spoke with a local dialect so it may be that the effort to engage in conversations limited his ability to make social friendships. This experience was also reported by a Polish student Henryk (one of the students who were interviewed but not included as a case study, (see section 3.3.1)) who commented that that the effort to communicate with others was so much that people just gave up. Gagan did have a large support network at home so he did not seem to feel the isolation keenly and this may have limited his motivation to expend a lot of energy trying to make friends he did not need socially or to support his college work.

5.6 Conclusions from the case studies

This chapter has related the experiences of five students as they invested time and energy in their education and future identities. All were interviewed using semi-structured interviews and the resultant data has been analysed around structural themes imposed by the research questions. Interweaving these themes are the identities of the students as they seek to establish and maintain positive identities. Data from the lecturers was also drawn upon comparing the students' perspectives with those of their lecturers.

All the students had problems around English language competence to some extent but their ability to recognise these problems and overcome them very much depended on sociocultural factors such as relationships, support offered and accepted, and their alignment with particular identities. How they dealt with lack of vocabulary and understanding depended very much on the individual student. The students who appeared to have positive self identities (Bijon, Dita and Gagan) could ask their lecturers for support, usually by staying back after class and asking for clarification: while Amy and Katarzyna did not ask their lecturers but instead relied on classmates. Dita, Gagan and to some extent Bijon sought support for their writing, but again Amy and Katarzyna did not.

The students' ability to judge their own competence and therefore the support they needed is illustrated in Table 7 below using Howells' (1982) theory of communicative competence.

| | Unconscious | Conscious |
|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| Incompetent | Katarzyna | Amy |
| | | Bijon |
| | | Gagan |
| Competent | | Dita |

Table 7: Students awareness of competence

The de-contextualised grammar lessons offered by the ILC did not meet the needs of the students. Amy discounted grammar lessons because she could already do the exercises: for Bijon the opportunity costs of resting and working were too great to come into college on his day off while Katarzyna compared herself favourably with her peers and felt that grammar was not important. The ILC was most effectively used by Dita who decided what she wanted, not grammar lessons, but proofreading with explanations while Gagan accessed the centre to use the computer facilities and accessed language support at home. None of the students made any suggestion about how services could be improved except Amy who suggested that an English language teacher and classes would be helpful. While this is the view of only one student, it would suggest that it was possible that the ILC staff were not viewed as teaching professionals by the students.

There appeared to be less distance between the students and their Scottish lecturers than would be the case in Poland or Nepal and the work was considered more practical and less theoretical than Iran

and Poland. However, when comparing Scottish Education with their previous education some students were not making like-for-like comparisons when comparing further education with university or school. Like the lecturers in section 4.5 the students' did not identify any other intercultural differences.

While all students said that the L1 students were friendly and helpful and the only instance of overt prejudice was giggling at Dita's accent, most of the L2 students struggled to become integrated into their class. Language competence played a part in this and the local accent was considered to be difficult to understand however this is too simplistic an explanation. Three out of the five case study students were some years older than their classmates and so experienced difficulties not only because of language but because of age differences. Students tended to group together by age, gender interests and the older students had limited access to other students and the support and friendship they could offer.

English language competence had a major impact on the experience of the L2 students but to suggest, as the 'myth of transience' does, that improving their English would resolve all issues is too simplistic. The case study students all had issues with language competence to varying degrees but each had different college experiences indicating that sociocultural factors which played a major role in their experience of college.

Chapter 6: Discussion and Implications

This research has explored the experiences of students and staff at a further education college in Scotland using a case study methodology (see section 3.1) informed by a sociocultural approach (see section 2.0). This approach takes the view that education is more than just exchanges in the classroom but a complex sociocultural exchange where identities are built, accepted and rejected.

One of the presumptions at the start of this research project was that L2 students were not performing as well as they might either by failing their courses or by not achieving higher grades (Severiens & Wolff, 2008). Statistically L2 students are no more likely to fail their course than L1 students (see Appendix D). However this is written with caveats: L2 students are more likely to be enrolled on to lower level courses such as access courses and, while this does give them an opportunity to improve their English, it means that they spend a year on a course which is often below their intellectual ability: Some of the L1 students on these courses are likely to have literacy and social challenges and so are more likely to withdraw from the course, thus skewing the statistics. These students also give L2 students poor linguistic models and hence an unrealistic sense of their own abilities, leading to further under performance.

The research questions were:

1. What kind of challenges do students with English as a second language experience in relation to:
 - a. Issues of language competence.
 - b. English as a second language support.
 - c. Expectations about educational practices.
 - d. Relationships with staff and students.
2. How do these challenges impact on the college experiences of the students and their lecturers?

In section 6.1 I will discuss the research findings in relation to these questions in light of the literature reviewed in chapter 2 and then in light of issues emerging from the interviews in section 6.2 I consider the implications of my findings for current theory and practice. In section 6.3 I review the methodological challenges I experienced in the course of carrying out the research and consider the limitations of the project. Finally, I make recommendations for future research in section 6.4.

6.1 Discussion of the findings according to structural and emergent themes

As discussed in section 3.4 both thematic analysis and discourse analysis were used to analyse the data with structural themes imposed by the interview questions which were in turn informed by

the research questions. Emergent themes (Table 6, section 3.4.2) for lecturers were student progress, plagiarism, working conditions and identity, both in terms of the lecturers' professional identity and the concept of the 'ideal student', which illustrates the educational expectations that the lecturers had of the students. Emergent themes for students were progress and identity along with related ideas around investment of time. These emergent themes were so salient as to warrant a separate discussion in section 6.1.5 as well as being woven through the discussion of the structural themes below.

6.1.1 Issues around language competence

Three themes around the issue of language competence are discussed in this section:

- Engaging with disciplinary knowledge
- Standards of academic English
- Disadvantages and misunderstandings

6.1.1.1 Engaging with disciplinary knowledge

Both lecturers and L2 students recognised that there were issues around English language competence but sometimes the nature of the problem was not always recognised by either the students or staff (see sections 4.2 and 5). The lecturers appeared to subscribe to the 'myth of transience' (Rose, 1985:27) seeing poor language skills as a problem which would disappear with more support, practice or time.

Even though they acknowledged that L2 students struggled with the subject specific language of their courses they also appeared to believe that if a student's general English could be brought up to a good standard then their subject specific English would also improve. Thus English language acquisition was viewed as a technical skill. Neil acknowledged that he had stopped using some subject specific vocabulary because of the L2 students' limitations in language competence although he maintained that general English was required more than subject specific knowledge. Neil's opinion may be influenced by his reluctance to engage in language support for fear of loss of professional identity (see section 4.3) and because he believed that he already had a full workload (see section 4.1). For the subject specific lecturers to recognise that they could contribute to the support of language development would mean that they would be adding to an already considerable workload and, if time were not allocated to do this, it could lead to additional stress and perhaps damage to professional identity.

One of the issues in assessing disciplinary academic language skills is that development of those skills can proceed at different rates and so a student may be stronger in one area than another: a number of the case studies highlighted the issue of uneven language development. Silent or quiet students were classified by their lecturers as having poor production rather than reception skills although, in contradiction to Le Roux (2001:274), lecturers did not

equate these poor skills with low intelligence. For Amy and Gagan, inability to answer questions and silence in the classroom were often interpreted as an inability to communicate rather than a lack of understanding of the topic or having insufficient 'college knowledge' (see section 2.3.1) to participate in class. This focus on language skills by lecturers allowed students to disguise lack of understanding. Both Amy and Katarzyna avoided asking their lecturers for help; instead they used a variety of strategies to receive assistance from their classmates or waited until they were at home before looking up words in the dictionary. This was explained in terms of their attempts to preserve a positive identity (Gee, 2005:21), rather than asking questions, which would reveal that confident use of disciplinary language was still an aspiration rather than a reality (Street, 2010). However, as Yen commented in section 4.3, students may not be able to accurately judge their level of understanding. Not wanting to make a student uncomfortable, lecturers did not push silent students to speak in class, but this may have legitimised non-participation and limited students' opportunity to progress from peripheral participation where they listened, to fuller participation where they could speak. (See discussion of legitimate peripheral participation in section 2.5.1).

6.1.1.2 Standards of academic English

- While language issues were not always recognised by the L2 students and staff, these issues were also not reported

consistently which may suggest that even in the same discipline different modules had different standards of academic English. This is consistent with the discussion in section 2.1.3 where I argued that there are no absolute criteria for academic writing (Hewings, *et al.* 2007:228) because academic English is always changing and evolving (Scarcella, 2003:8). If lecturers bring their own differing expectations for academic writing to an institution it is conceivable that even within the same department there may be differing expectations. Since these expectations are not always made explicit to students (Lillis: 2001:22) confusion may arise around the issue of what is required because it may be different for each lecturer. This of course also made it difficult for the ILC staff to support students' writing as the expectations were not made explicit to them either, as illustrated by the confusion caused by Rhona's request for writing support for Amy which, when given, was not what was required (see section 5.4.3).

Zamel (2004:12-13) (see section 2.1.2) argued that lecturers are afraid of accepting lower standards of English in case this results in a fall in academic standards but this fear was not apparent in the lecturers interviewed. Special assessment arrangements were frequently put in place to allow the students to demonstrate their knowledge of their subject despite their issues with English language.

Amy was allowed to write in bullet points and key words while the business lecturers sometimes used oral examinations instead of written. There was an acknowledgment that this was not to make the assessment easier for students but to make the assessment fairer so that the student was not penalised for poor English language skills. The access courses designed by the college had more scope for special arrangements than the courses designed by Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) and so an L2 student could not expect to have the same special assessment arrangements applied for every course they undertook. This appears to have led to a problem for Amy. While her first year course allowed her to submit her answers in bullet points instead of an essay, in her second year she *had* to submit an essay. It would appear that failure to develop essay writing skills in her first year contributed to her problems in the second year. This would suggest that special assessment arrangements may not always be helpful as they may only temporarily mitigate the effects of poor language competence rather than fully addressing them.

Poor English skills also inadvertently contributed to plagiarism (see section 4.2.1): many L2 students were learning to write academic English and failed to paraphrase material from books, articles and the internet sufficiently to make their writing their own. Lecturers did recognise this as a problem with writing, rather than an attempt at cheating, and acknowledged that it was a problem for all students.

Some L2 students were seen as blatantly cheating, with whole reports being downloaded from the internet, although this was relatively uncommon. Staff did not feel supported to deal with what they felt was an increasing problem because, as discussed in section 4.2.1, there was no formal detection software used by the college and the discipline system was felt to be weighted towards students' rights, with staff concerns about plagiarism not being addressed. This led to plagiarism being dealt with informally by the lecturing staff, so it was impossible to discover the extent of the problem within the college as a whole.

6.1.1.3 Disadvantages and misunderstandings

Piller (2011:142) argues that concerns about language competence can disguise racism (see section 2.1.3) where L2 students' opportunities for language support and/or work placements are limited. This appears to be the case for Katarzyna, who was not placed on a work placement outside of the college because of her poor English language competence. Work placements are a valuable source of experience, not only giving students direct experience of the workplace which can be listed on a CV, but also often leading to offers of employment. By limiting L2 students' access to these placements on the grounds of English language competence L2 students are being denied equal access to the employment market as. Equally Bijon was not considered worthy of support by his lecturers because he did not attend language support and previous

referrals for plagiarism appears to have positioned him as a student who was lazy and unwilling to undertake the work needed to help himself. Morita (2004:598) argues that the formation of identities and establishing legitimate participation can be sources of struggle (see section 2.5.1). It would appear that if Bijon had attended language support he may have been able to reposition himself in the eyes of the lecturers and might have received the support he wanted from them. However, he may not have known the importance his lecturers attached to attending the ILC.

Katarzyna also did not appear to understand the importance of language support to her lecturers. While Bijon was constrained by time and the need to work to fund his study and so weighed up the opportunity costs of the extra support, Katarzyna did not understand where her academic English language competence stood in relation to other students on her course. The use of Howell's (1982) application of the concept of communicative competence (see section 2.2.1) has allowed me to illustrate the different perceptions the case study students have of their language competence and to demonstrate that these perceptions are crucial to their attitudes towards educational support. Katarzyna, as an unconscious incompetent (see section 5.2.2), compared her writing abilities to the lower end of the class and in particular a working class adult returner student who herself sought support from the ILC. Not all dialects of language are valued equally and written English usually takes the

form of standard English which, as Tett (2000:52) argues, favours the English middle-class rather than the Scottish working-class. Lack of knowledge of the status of English dialects appears to have led Katarzyna to make incorrect judgements about her own language competence and so she did not seek language support. Crucially, a student's perception of their support needs depends on their ability to judge the cultural and educational capital (Bourdieu, 1986) of those around them.

6.1.2 English as a second language support

Three issues emerged in relation to English as a second language:

- The ability of the institution to diagnose the needs and abilities of the L2 students and;
- The institutional location of English as a second language support which in turn impacted the professional status of staff and their ability to access professional development as well as
- Whether additional or differentiated support was offered to the students.

Each of these will be discussed in greater detail below.

6.1.2.1 *Diagnosing needs and potential*

At the time of the research there was no formal mechanism for assessing a student's level of English language competence (see section 4.2) thus lecturers had to form an opinion of L2 students'

speaking abilities from either student information sessions prior to joining the course or from the results of a core-skill diagnostic test which concentrated only on spelling and grammar. As discussed in section 2.1.1 neither the ability to speak in social situations nor the ability to do grammar exercises are good indicators of academic English competence, which is illustrated by Amy's ability to do grammar exercises without being able to transfer this knowledge to essay writing. This meant that when placing students on courses the lecturers had to rely on their own experience of L2 students and while most lecturers interviewed had worked with L2 students in the past they did not have a wide experience of doing so. The college was committed to testing students' basic skills with the core skill diagnostic test but did not train its staff in assessing L2 students' language competence. The results of the core skill diagnostic test coupled with lecturers' lack of experience and lack of training meant that three of the five case study students appeared to be on the wrong level of course (Amy, Katarzyna and Dita) and one student (Bijon) chose a different discipline from the one he had studied at university in his native country because of fear of the subject specific language being too difficult.

6.1.2.2 The institutional location and status of English language support

The ILC staff, as discussed in section 1.2.1, were classified as support rather than academic staff and this, as argued in section

2.2.2, suggests that language and subject knowledge were seen as two different things (Zamel, 2006:6), with the work in the ILC seen as 'a low-skill, non teaching role' (Barkas, 2011:266) evidenced by there being no requirement for ILC staff to have teaching qualifications and being paid less than the lecturers. While the ILC was promoted throughout the college as a support centre, its dislocation from, and its lower status in relation to the academic departments may have been counterproductive, with the ILC, and the support it offered, being downgraded in the eyes of the students. This was indicated when Amy, who rejected grammar lessons from the ILC, suggested that, in order to offer more support to L2 students, the college should offer English classes taught by English teachers (see section 5.4.3).

Despite the L2 students' rejection of the support offered by the ILC, the lecturers supported the college structural hierarchy which placed English language support within the remit of the ILC. A major contribution to this was their belief that English language was a technical skill which could be mastered. However, lecturers were not given additional time to support students and, if they used marking and preparation time to do so, they would then either be underprepared or have to take work home. Time was in short supply for the lecturers and they had to weigh up the opportunity costs (see section 2.5.2) of competing responsibilities, which led to decisions about how deserving a student was of their time. The most successful support offered to L2 students came in the form of

contextualised support (see section 4.3) where the students were shown questions and techniques to answer them with worked examples of model answers. It was reported by the International Development Officer that students learned a lot from this session because it was targeted to their needs and made explicit the expected standard for a finished essay and how to approach writing one. This demonstrates that targeted support, where expectations of academic writing are made explicit, is more useful to students than generalised writing support.

6.1.2.3 Additional support verses differentiated support

A belief which assumes that if an L2 student learns enough grammar and vocabulary then they will be a competent academic English user is clearly flawed since native speakers may not be competent in academic English (Lillis, 2001:21). In line with Peelo and Luxon's (2007) argument (section 2.2.2), failure to properly assess language abilities led to support being put in place which, with an over reliance on de-contextualized grammar lessons, did not address the needs of the L2 students. In addition, the lecturers did not offer any information about students or course needs to the ILC staff. This would suggest that the specific language needs of the individual academic subjects were not recognised and, as discussed in section 2.1.2, the academic writing practices of those subjects were considered as the only way to write academically.

As argued in section 2.2.3, the fact that English language support was offered outwith the academic departments and thus was additional to their course can result in more pressure being put on students, as support sessions take up time and put additional strain on their resources (Peelo and Luxon, 2007:66). In his interview Bijon stated that he did not attend ILC sessions because he was 'too lazy' but I have argued that this is a mistranslation and what he meant was that he was too tired (see section 5.1.3). The pressure to work and study meant that for Bijon the opportunity costs of attending the ILC support sessions were too great as the support sessions offered were not valuable enough to meet his specific needs.

The grammar lessons offered by the ILC were not valued by the L2 students they were offered to: both Amy and another student not involved in the research (but who had complained to the International Development Officer) reported that they could already do the exercises being offered by the ILC and that they were not learning anything new. Failure to meet students' needs explains poor ILC attendance; however this non-attendance led to students being classified as not being motivated enough to help themselves. While some lecturers wanted to make attending English language support sessions in the ILC compulsory, they did not question why L2 students were unwilling to attend the ILC sessions

Section 4.2 discussed the lecturers' preparedness to make adjustments to the assessment procedures for L2 students, although

their ability to do so was limited by the requirements of the particular course. While these special assessment arrangements benefited the students in the short term they did not help the students develop a realistic assessment of their own skills: the students appeared to feel that, if they were passing the course, then they did not need support. As the level of courses increased, the ability to make special assessment arrangements decreased: Amy was allowed to use bullet points in her first year assessments but that did not help her develop her ability to write, and the following year she had to answer in full sentences, which she did not appear to have the skill to do.

6.1.3 Expectations about educational practices

Three issues emerged in relation to expectations about educational practices highlighted three issues:

- 'College knowledge' and cultural capital
- Teaching and learning styles
- Teacher expectations

I discuss each of these below.

6.1.3.1 *'College knowledge' and cultural capital*

Differences in educational expectations arising from students' prior experience in other educational systems did not appear to be noticed by either the lecturers or the students. The lecturers admitted that they were not aware of the cultural background of their students but it

is also questionable as to how much they explicitly knew about the college culture, what Murphy and Fleming call 'college knowledge' (Murphy and Fleming, 2000:82). In the international student guide (Appendix G) instead of explaining the ethos of Scottish education, for example its student centred approach, culture is examined in terms of museums and theatres which suggests that the educational culture of the Scottish education system in general, and of the college in particular, was accepted without question as the only, or natural way, to do things. Thus the college failed to make explicit to L2 students the unwritten educational expectations on which it based its educational practice.

All countries and regions have to a greater or lesser extent topics that they teach because of local or national interest, for example the work of a poet, artist or scientist. However, this knowledge is often taken for granted as common knowledge when in fact it may only be common knowledge to that locality or culture. Gagan was fortunate in that within the support mechanism of his extended family he had access to resources needed for his course such as books on European artists, as European history of art was a completely new subject to him. Students who have not been educated in Scotland may not have the same general cultural knowledge as native Scots and so may begin a course already disadvantaged because of their lack of 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1986).

6.1.3.2 Teaching and learning styles

In the interviews, all the students were asked to compare their experience of education in their native countries to that in Scotland. None of the students were making a like-for-like comparison, with three (Bijon, Katarzyna and Dita) making comparisons with University and two (Amy and Gagan) making comparisons with school. Those students who had attended university prior to arriving in the UK also commented that further education was more practical and less intellectual than their experience of university. Arguably this is also a major difference between Scottish further education colleges and Scottish universities. These students reported that they enjoyed the practical aspects of their Scottish further education courses as it helped them to learn.

Some differences in classroom management styles were also noted, with Katarzyna and Dita both commenting that teachers in Poland were less friendly than Scottish lecturers and Gagan commenting that classroom discipline was much stricter in Nepal. Although they said they preferred the informality of Scotland, Dita was initially surprised by what she felt were rude students while Gagan also expressed discomfort as he was used to working in a silent class, whereas his Scottish Art and Design workroom was noisy and he found this difficult. Both Dita and Gagan were able to discuss their concerns with their lecturers and, for Gagan, the issue was resolved, with students agreeing to be quieter, although not silent. Scottish

further education may be more informal than its equivalent in some other countries, and while many enjoy this experience, the lecturers need to be aware that some L2 students may need support to adjust.

The lecturers did not notice any differences in educational expectations which they could attribute to cultural differences but there may be a number of reasons for this. The college was a small rural college and there were no significant numbers of any one particular ethnic group so the L2 students were not seen as a large group but rather as a collection of different individuals. Hence any difference was seen as an individual variation rather than a product of a particular ethnic or national background. The methodology of the research may also have contributed to this finding. There was a marked use of the word 'individual' when talking about the L2 students and it may be that as the lecturers were interviewed about particular L2 students rather than L2 students in general, this may have led them to think about L2 students as individuals rather than a group. Only the International Development Officer, Yen, observed any cultural differences stating that Asian [Chinese] students were also quieter in class than L1 students and less likely to join in with group work. This resulted in the loss of opportunity to share cultural traditions and observations with the class. However, as discussed in sections 4.5 and 6.1.1.1, the expectation that L2 students will be silent because of their culture can lead to lower expectations of classroom participation by the lecturers which might result in

disempowerment, with the loss of opportunity to move from listening and being at the edge of discussions to full participation in the classroom (Lave & Wenger, 1991:36).

Despite not noticing any differences in educational expectation there was evidence that some lecturers tended to draw on cultural stereotypes to explain behaviours, with the Chinese being seen as more community-based and cooperative and the Middle Eastern students as willing to cut corners and/or rely on favours. This tendency to reify images of cultures can create negative identities which can become fixed and unchanging (Le Roux, 2001). Bijon did not fit the profile of 'the ideal student' in either his poor attendance or his lack of preparedness for class but his behaviour was interpreted in terms of cultural stereotyping by at least one of his lecturers (see section 4.5) and when a negative identity is ascribed from someone in power it can be much harder to resist and break free from (Morita, 2004).

6.1.3.3 Teacher expectations

The concept of 'the ideal student' is useful to describe the lecturers' expectations of their students: it illustrates an ongoing 'Educational Conversation'. Interview data suggested that the lecturers had an expectation that students should have four traits: independence, good study skills, academic ability, and motivation (see section 4.4.2). Described by her lecturer as a good student, Dita, a university

graduate, was used to working at a level higher than required for further education and so could outperform the L1 students in her class despite having challenges with her English language competence. She was considered to be highly motivated by her lecturer and 'motivation' was considered to be an important attribute of 'the ideal student'. While she was still using the psychological term 'motivation' Susan talked about Dita being focussed on her priorities, acknowledging that she was investing in the future in line with Norton's (1995) concept of 'investment' which she uses to describe a student's relationship to learning their target language. I argue that this term can be used to describe a student's relationship to all types of learning. While Dita and Gagan were seen as good students, some students were regarded as not doing enough to help themselves and Bijon in particular was seen as relying on others instead of working himself. In an educational system which is student centred rather than teacher led the student must take a more active role and this can be a difficult transition for a student who is not used to this system. Lillis (1997:186) argues that often academic departments do not make their expected writing conventions explicit to students and I would argue that in addition to writing conventions there are other expectations, such as the need to work independently and be responsible for one's own learning, which are also not made explicit and which disadvantage students who are unaware of them.

6.1.4 Relationships with staff and students

Sociocultural theory argues that L2 students' relationships with both

- students, and
- staff

are very important to their educational experiences because academic achievement cannot be separated from social and emotional well-being (Tinto, 1997:600). Relationships provide opportunities not only to improve language competence but also to form a peer support system. I will discuss each of these in turn.

6.1.4.1 Relationships with students

Difficulties with spoken English and difficulties in understanding the local accent and dialect were believed by the lecturers to cause problems in the formation of friendships between L1 and L2 students. However, although the L2 students interviewed did comment that they found the local accent difficult to understand, they did not highlight this as a factor in social isolation. Amy appeared to integrate well and was a member of a small group of friends. Her limited ability to understand or express herself (see section 5.4.2) did not seem be a barrier. Rhona, Amy's lecturer, suggested that Amy was in control of her friendships and chose her friends carefully to reflect her personality and study requirements, disregarding those class members who did not meet her needs. Her friends not only gave her companionship within the college but, according to Amy, would

explain course concepts that she did not understand. Amy had the poorest language competence of all the L2 students interviewed but she appears to have been the most successful at developing useful friendships with her peers. For this reason, the lecturers' suggestion that language was a barrier appears to be too simplistic.

All the students claimed to get on well with their peers but three highlighted the age difference between them and their peers as a barrier to integration, with both Bijon and Dita describing their peers as immature. Three of the five students (Bijon, Katarzyna and Dita) were older than their peers, substantially so in the case of Katarzyna and Dita. Only Amy and Gagan were of similar age to the majority in their class.

Dita was in a class with students who were considerably younger than herself. Despite having good self-confidence and a positive identity, she struggled to be accepted by her class until her lecturer, Susan, deliberately moved her around groups so that the group members could see how useful Dita could be to them (section 5.3.5). Lack of social relationships may lead to isolation and loneliness but also to fewer opportunities for language development and peer-support. L1 students can fear that having to work with an L2 student will disadvantage them, pulling down their grades (Summers & Volet, 2008), while L2 students can have problems forming relationships. They may make one or two friends but are often isolated and in class sit on their own or close to the lecturer. Through her lecturer's

actions, Dita was eventually accepted by her classmates, although she still reported being lonely and missing the conversations of adults. Being in the same class does not mean that meaningful contact between students will follow (Harrison & Peacock, 2010), so action such as that taken by Susan can be extremely useful to counter academic isolation (Norton, 2000; Morita, 2004). However, social integration still needs shared reference points (Harrison & Peacock, 2010:880) and will not necessarily be fostered by successful academic integration.

Inability to integrate with others means that L2 students may not receive any peer support, or peer support to the standard they require. During group work, Bijon and Katarzyna (section 4.6) were at the periphery of the group rather than at the centre. Katarzyna in particular was limited in her choices of relationships within her class. Seen by some students as demanding, she was only able to access the support of a woman of a similar age to herself. Unfortunately this L1 student was of poor educational background and this gave Katarzyna a false sense of her abilities. If she had been able to compare herself to stronger L1 students she would have been able to form a much more realistic assessment of her own skills.

Although Gagan did not make particular friends within his class and was often alone at break-times he did not seem to be concerned by this. One reason for his apparent lack of concern may be that Gagan, with an academically qualified extended family (see section 5.5), was

able to access useful support whenever he needed it and so he did not look to other students for support. On the other hand, as he was on a low-level course, he may have found that his peer group did not have the same educational and social capital of his extended family and so may have chosen not to form close friendships.

The L2 students' relationships with their L1 peers were complex and very much a product of the sociocultural context. The ability to form relationships depended on many different factors, not least age and gender. For the L2 students, relationships appeared to form along age and gender lines, suggesting that these are major points of reference which may need to be present before it is possible for other shared references to be explored.

6.1.4.2 Relationships with staff

One of the significant factors influencing the relationship between the L2 students and their lecturers was the amount of time the lecturers spent in the classroom and the amount of time available for support. Spending 24 hours per week in classroom teaching meant that lecturers were able to have day-to-day contact with their students but the need to deliver the curriculum, and the competition for attention in the class could mean that time spent with individual students was limited. Lecturers commented that they had to ration their time carefully and tried to give support to the students who needed it most but this would, on occasions, cause ill feelings amongst other

students who perceived that they had not received an equal amount of attention. Equally the lecturers who were personal tutors were meant to hold regular meetings with students to check on progress but because of time pressure this did not happen as often as it should. All this points to the lecturers being so constrained by time that it was difficult for them to get to know their students really well and this acted as a barrier to informal integration which research (as discussed in section 2.2.4) indicates is important for L2 students' achievement (Severiens and Wolff, 2008:261).

While there was no evidence that the lecturers felt alienated in their own classrooms (Zamel, 2004:4) there was a suggestion that there were strains within the relationships between the lecturers and the L2 students. Arguably the lecturers felt a sense of powerlessness to compel students to contribute in class. While lecturers said that they did not want to push L2 students to contribute, and while it is possible that this stance was rooted in kindness and an unwillingness to humiliate a student, it could be argued that lecturers adopted this stance for fear of criticism about how they dealt with L2 students. To insist on a contribution which involved humiliating the student may have left lecturers vulnerable to accusations of insensitivity at best and racism at worst. Bijon was also allowed to continue on his course even when his attendance had dropped below the 80% required for continuing registration. Even when his classroom behaviour fell below an acceptable standard (for example by falling asleep in class)

he was still allowed to continue. This would suggest that lecturers did not feel supported in dealing with L2 students who did not meet the required disciplinary/behaviour standards. When discussing plagiarism, Pauline (see section 4.2.1) commented that it was felt that the college disciplinary system was weighted in favour of the students and this may have affected how the lecturers addressed the challenges presented by L2 students. Because of this, the relationship between staff and L2 students was a complex one in relation to both student and staff identities, and the nature of these relationships had implications for the support students were offered by the lecturers.

6.1.5 Identity, investment and opportunity cost

The themes of identity and investment emerged from the data and I have argued that the addition of opportunity cost enhances the concept of investment (see section 2.5). Whilst these themes impact on and are woven through the discussions of structural themes above, I considered them so important to the student experience that they required a more in-depth discussion.

Identities are formed in collaboration with others and, as discussed in section 2.5.1, people cannot choose any identity they want (Hyland & Tse, 2012:156) as these must be negotiated with others (Norton, 2000; Le Roux, 2001; Morita, 2004; Gee, 2005). Bijon frequently told people how many hours he worked and appeared to wish to be accepted as a hard-working young man but he struggled to have this

identity accepted. His lecturers saw him as a lazy young man who did not know where his priorities lay and tried to get others to do his work for him (see section 5.1). This image was very hard to resist because it came from people who were in a position of power (Morita, 2004). Bijon had conflicts of interests within his multiple subject positions. He had to be a restaurant manager as well as a student and earning money in order to study actually detracted from his ability to study. Bijon had to weigh up the opportunity costs of his conflicting 'investment opportunities' (see section 2.5.2), for example the need to rest after work against the need to attend language support sessions.

Norton (2000) sees students as investing in education and in their future identities, making decisions about what will best suit their needs. However, they do not always make the best decisions.

Katarzyna could not bring herself to tell a lecturer that she could not hear him because she did not want to be perceived as a person who caused trouble. The ability to ask their lecturer for further clarification was bound up in students' self-esteem. Students with a strong sense of their own worth, such as Dita and Gagan, were able to admit that they did not understand without any loss of face or fear of the consequences, but neither Amy nor Katarzyna had the confidence to express their needs. These students would rather tell their lecturer that they understood than admit that they did not. This suggests, as Street (2010) argues, that they felt they did not deserve or had not

yet earned the identity they aspired to or were fearful of being discovered to be unworthy.

Lecturers also have identities to project and protect which, in part, comes from knowledge and practice and, as Neil commented (section 4.3), they too do not wish their subject knowledge to be called into question and this can prevent them from offering support outside their subject area. They also have a strong sense of managerial professional identity (Sachs, 2001) which is tied to student success via retention and achievement statistics. As evidenced in section 4.4.1 those lecturers with struggling students all made efforts to establish their professional identity during their interviews while the others did not. With increased emphasis on achievement rates, struggling students can be seen as a liability, and I have argued that one of the reasons Bijon was found to be unworthy of support was because he was perceived as not trying hard enough (Tinto, 1997:600) and in danger of failure, and so he could possibly damage his lecturers' reputations.

6.1.6 Summary of discussion of themes

While this section has dealt with the issues around language competence, English language support, educational expectations and relationships with staff and students as well as issues around identity and investment in separate sub-sections, these topics are interwoven and cannot be seen in isolation. English language competence impacted on all areas of the L2 students' educational

experience and was in turn affected by them. Poor language competence not only affected their ability to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of their academic course but also their ability to form relationships, which in turn reduced the opportunity to access good academic models for comparison, which meant that L2 students could not compare their skills with others and therefore they did not know that they needed English language support or what type of support was required.

However the student experience was affected by more than their language competence. College policy in terms of the location of the ILC and the status of the staff and the timetabled teaching hours of the lecturers also impacted on their experience. College policy also explicitly contributed to the formation of lecturing staff's identities and anxieties about these identities by measuring student success and retention rates. It also contributed implicitly to students' identities through the college attendance policy as well as an educational ethos and practices which were not always made explicit. These policies, in turn, contributed to the ongoing 'educational conversation' of the 'ideal student' against which student worthiness of support is measured. The experience of the student, as would be predicted from a sociocultural approach, is a multifaceted experience in which students take action, weighing up the opportunity costs of some actions against the competing opportunity costs of others, as they

more between subject positions. At the same time, they are also acted upon by forces, policies and individuals outwith their control.

6.2 Implications for current theory and practice

6.2.1 Issues around language competence

Difficulties around English language competence are clearly evinced from both the student and lecturer perceptions. Furthermore it is clear that these difficulties are related to the individual language requirement of modules and courses. This highlights the importance of assessing students' English language competence prior to or at the beginning of their course. Given that different courses (and indeed different modules within the same course) make different language demands upon a student, a generic assessment tool is unlikely to meet the needs of assessment of all courses and modules. Current practice within further and higher education is reliant on generic assessment such as IELTS. While the UCAS university standard required for academic study is IELTS 6.0 (UCAS, 2014), the minimum IELTS standard required by the college at the centre of this research is a score of 5.0. At this level information about the component scores rather than the overall score is more useful to lecturers making decisions about student course placement (Manning and Mayor, 1999). The lack of this information devalues the worth of using generic IELTS assessments because students are being accepted with an English competence level which is generally

accepted to be below the level required for academic study. At this low level further investigative work, matching the language requirement of the course with the abilities of the L2 student, is necessary to gauge the skills and abilities of the students and/or assess the support they will require.

In addition to assisting L2 student placement, having a set of language assessment procedures that the staff and L2 students are confident with may in turn alleviate the problem of students disguising their lack of understanding. As Street (2010:210) argues (see section 2.5.1), being insecure in an identity can also lead to fear of being found to be inadequate and this research found evidence that seeking support from lecturers was linked to identity and the desire to protect vulnerabilities (see section 5.6). Where assessment interpretations by knowledgeable staff result in a targeted support programme based on the needs of the course the L2 students may feel more confident to ask for support and participate in class. While research would be required to identify suitable assessment(s), it is clear that regardless of the solution chosen, the lecturers would require training to enable them to develop the skills necessary to both identify and assess the language skills, including academic writing skills, which are required for the courses they are teaching. Other than diversity awareness none of the lecturers interviewed in this research had received training to work with L2 students and this is an area that Butcher *et.al* (2007:483) argue is lacking in initial

teacher training more generally. Without training in any of the above areas, the lecturers are thus left unsupported and ill-equipped to make the decisions they have to, concerning L2 student placement and support.

As discussed in section 4.2, lecturers made special assessment arrangements for certain L2 students who had difficulty demonstrating their knowledge and understanding in writing. Though intended to help students who would otherwise be disadvantaged, one side-effect of this appears to be that students may develop a false sense of their ability. In section 2.1.2 it was argued that an emphasis on grammatical issues can lead to students believing language is more important than content but this research tentatively suggests that special assessment arrangements may encourage the opposite belief, that if a student can pass a course using special arrangements then there is no need to improve language abilities. Again, this is an area where more research is required.

6.2.2 ESL support and opportunity costs

In section 4.3 it was shown that constraints on the lecturers' time meant they had to make decisions about supporting various students. When evaluating the opportunity costs of such support they looked for evidence that students were committed to their course and were doing all they could to support themselves. One of the indicators of commitment and self-support was attending the ILC. Those students who did not attend the ILC were deemed as not

doing enough to support themselves, therefore lecturers were reluctant to spend extra time with them. Similarly, a lack of improvement in the students' English language was interpreted as lack of application rather than questioning if the support met the needs of the students. These factors combined to initiate a cycle of deficiency; the students needed both generic language and subject specific support but could not access the subject specific support because they did not take up the generic language support offered in the ILC.

The research in chapters 5 & 6 highlighted that the opportunity costs of attending the grammar sessions were not perceived as a good investment for the students and so they did not attend. One of the most important findings that I had to confront in this research was that the support offered by the ILC in the form of grammar lessons did not help the students improve their competence to study in English. As the manager of the ILC at the time of the research I was responsible for this. The ILC staff were basic-skills staff who supported L2 students because this appeared to be a natural extension of literacy support. The distinction between support staff and academic staff was a major reason that ILC staff were not provided with relevant teacher training. To train them as teachers would have opened up the possibility that they should be regarded as academic staff with academic pay and conditions. The opportunity cost of positioning the staff as support staff meant that appropriate

staff development could not be undertaken even when it was offered free from the Scottish Government. It is quite common to position language tutors as support staff within educational institutions (see section 2.2.2) and this limits the professional development that staff are able to undertake, causing student support to suffer. By failing to recognise and encourage staff to develop their potential and become professionals specialising in academic literacies, barriers can be erected which stop support goals being met.

A number of the students were conscious of needing help with their English and while they knew that grammar lessons did not fulfil their needs they were not able to articulate what they did need. Only one student, Dita, (see section 5.3.3) was able to do that and was successfully supported. It is easy to blame the students for not taking up support or not knowing what they need; however staff have to examine their own practices and try to understand why the support they are recommending is rejected. The concepts of investment (Norton Pierce, 1995) and opportunity costs (see section 2.5.2) are very useful in this context. When lecturers stop viewing students in a fixed psychological way as either motivated or unmotivated and see them as making an investment in future identities, then it is easier to understand their behaviours. When the concept of investment is augmented by the concept of opportunity cost then it can be seen that the value of education is not fixed. It needs to compete with investments in other subject positions and the educational

opportunity needs not only to contribute to the student's future identity but outweigh other possible opportunities. As discussed in section 2.5.1 students have multiple subject positions which can be in conflict with each other: some of these positions will be influenced by basic economic needs or family expectations but others will be shaped by the individual's self-identification. At different points in their lives the requirements of some subject positions will be more important than others. For example the need for financial security may make the subject position of worker more important than that of student, while at other times the need to invest in future identities may make the student subject position more important than the need to earn money. This was the case for the former student described by Pauline (section 4.4.2) who, in order to study to pass his course, took time off work because it was more important for him to pass his course than to work to earn money. For Bijon (see section 5.1.1), on the other hand, work could be more important than attending class. By acknowledging that education is in competition with other aspects of a student's life, the challenge becomes one of making the educational support offering too important to miss, thus making the opportunity cost of *not* attending too great.

6.2.3 Expectations about educational practice

While cultural differences in educational expectations were not greatly apparent in this research, it was clear that the lecturers had expectations about the traits of a good or 'ideal' student. These traits

(section 4.4.2): independence, good study skills, academic ability and motivation, applied to both L1 and L2 students. However, L2 students may not have been aware of them, as their previous educational experience may have encouraged different traits (Harkness, *et al.*, 2007). Arguably not all these traits are essential for every level of course: for example, students on an access course may learn these skills as part of the course but it would appear that student' attitudes towards and ability to study may be judged on these traits.

The Scottish education system now employs a learner centred approach but to be successful in this approach, students need to know that they have a part to play in shaping their education and educational experience and may have to be assisted to take more responsibility for their role. It is therefore essential to both staff and students that the expectations of the course and classroom are made explicit so that everyone is clear about these. It is also important for training and support to be offered to both lecturers and students.

6.2.4 Relationships with staff and students

The relationships of the students with staff and other students were very important and affected other aspects of the student experience being examined here. The quality of relationships depended heavily on the students' identity. Students needed a positive identity to not only gain access to support from both lecturers and students but also for companionship, friendship and peer support from L1 students (Norton Pierce, 1995; Norton & Toohey, 2011). I have argued that

the traits of the 'ideal student' are part of an 'Educational Conversation' (see section 3.4.3 and Gee, (2005:21)) which appeared to inform lecturers' opinions of students. These opinions can in turn form the basis of ascribed identities, e.g. the lazy student or the good student, irrespective of the student's self-identification and, while positive identities are very helpful, an ascribed negative identity can impact on the level of support offered by lecturers.

While as recipients of public funding colleges need to provide value for money, the current emphasis on pass rates, student retention and targets damages the managerial professional identity of lecturers (Sachs, 2001) (see section 2.4.2). Additionally the potential loss of self-confidence and possibility of exposure (Lillis, 2001:84; Street, 2010:236) can result in the development of both defensive and negative feelings which can damage the relationship with the student.

Demographic factors such as age and gender as well as language competence can restrict the L2 student's ability to integrate into the classroom. Even the confident case study students struggled to be part of a group and often remained at the edge, which impacted both on social relationships and on the ability to take part in peer learning and support. Lecturers have an important role in supporting a student's formal integration into the class by stipulating groups for group work and by valuing the student's contribution, which demonstrates to the rest of the class that the student has something

to offer. I have argued above that fear of humiliating or pressurising L2 students to contribute in the class can unintentionally discourage an L2 student's legitimate participation and discouraging those L1 students who may have considered working with the L2 student. Lecturers therefore need to be given training to deal with silent students in class, legitimising L2 student participation, and they need to develop skills and methods to facilitate the integration of L1 and L2 students both in class and socially.

6.2.5 Summary of implications

A number of implications for practice have been offered which can be implemented to improve the L2 student educational experience.

6.2.5.1 Opportunity costs of policy decisions

When colleges make policy decisions on the placement of academic support and the status of the staff who give that support they should consider the opportunity costs of those decisions. The positioning of staff as support rather than academic staff limits access to professional development which in turn affects their ability to support L2 students. Equally the timetabled teaching hours of the academic staff also play a key role in the amount of time available for supporting individual students. There is a danger that while a college may wish to give comprehensive academic support to its students, its policy and budgetary decisions on staff working practices and status serve to undervalue the actual support that is given. Therefore

colleges must explicitly weigh up the opportunity costs of their policy and budgetary decisions.

6.2.5.2 Academic writing

Within further and higher education there is a dependence on generic assessments such as IELTS to assess students' language competence. However, none of the lecturers or support staff in this case study had been trained to interpret IELTS assessments in particular the component scores. Accordingly, even the limited benefits that IELTS offered were unavailable to them. Since different courses have different language demands the language competence requirements of each course need to be explicit to aid interpretation. Lack of staff training can undermine an institution's support mechanisms, as can the custom of positioning Learning and Language Centres as a support rather than an academic facility. Lack of support can remove opportunities for legitimate participation in class, because the student can fear to admit that they do not understand. This research indicates that only students who are confident in their identities will be able to admit lack of understanding and access the support they need.

6.2.5.3 Relationships and identity

Forming useful and fulfilling relationships with L1 students can be very difficult for L2 students (section 5.6) but it is crucial that they do so, not only to support their language acquisition but to form a peer

support network which will give them a good reference point from which to assess their own abilities and skills, and thereby their own knowledge and understanding, as well as fulfil their need for support. Lecturers cannot force students to make friends but they can help L2 students form useful L1/L2 working relationships by promoting group work and, as Susan did (section 5.3.5), stipulating who will work with whom rather than letting the students form the groups. As discussed in section 2.4.1 students need time to get to know each other in order to work well together. They can respond well to being given tasks to work together on, so an extension of this strategy could be to assign the students specific roles within a set activity, so that no student can opt-out or sit on the edge of the group. Clearly, this would need to be handled sensitively and further lecturer training may be required. This research suggests that lecturers can successfully take step to integrate students into official classroom activity but more extensive social integration can be much harder to orchestrate as this is much more dependent on identity and social capital. This research highlighted the role of age and gender as key factors in L1:L2 peer relationships (see section 5.6).

According to Sachs (2001) the concepts of the lecturers' professional identity is linked both to the retention and pass rate of students but also to the lecturers' interaction with their students. The link between the success and retention of a student as measured by the institution and the professional identity of the lecturers is a factor in relationship

development. Lecturers and staff must be given the time to develop relationships with the students but in this case study the lecturers' teaching load appeared to inhibit this because the personal tutorials which should have taken place did not because of time pressure. Thus the lecturers' inability to initiate meaningful relationships with the L2 students limited the support they were able to offer and led to the students being blamed for their perceived deficiencies rather than supported to overcome them. Awareness of how educational opportunities contribute to a student's future identity and the investment they are making in that identity, as well as the opportunity costs of that investment, will assist the lecturer in supporting the student to take advantage of the facilities and relationships that the college can offer. Thinking of the student in terms of investment and opportunity costs recognises that a student's relationship with education is complex and is played out in a sociocultural context where there are competing, often conflicting, subject positions. The use of the term opportunity costs recognises that these conflicting subject positions are not simply fuelled by expediency, but are important to students and moreover that there may be a loss in educational terms when one is favoured over others.

The expectations of UK further education need to be made explicit to L2 students and this has been illustrated in this case study by the 'Conversation' about the 'ideal student'. The process of doing so may help the lecturers develop realistic expectations for the level the

student is currently studying at so that they do not expect too much especially for students, like Bijon, who have other responsibilities and commitments. Lecturers need to make clear to the students the skills and attitudes required for each course. In this way they can make it clear that it is both expected and valued that students should seek clarification when they are unsure and that doing this is not a sign of failure (see section 4.4.2).

6.3 Methodological challenges and limitations of the research

There were a number of methodological challenges encountered during the research.

- Issues of power and status
- Accessing student views
- Technical issues
- Timing of interviews
- Extent of contact with students

Some of the challenges were overcome through the case study methodology, which allowed various sources of data to be collected, combined and analysed. This allowed information which was not available from some sources to be collected via other sources. This section will give consideration to the complexities of other challenges and acknowledge the limitations of the research.

6.3.1 Issues of power and status

As a member of staff within the college I was both insider and outsider and issues of power and status had an influence, for example while my status may have made it easier to gain access to college policy and student attendance data it may have been an obstacle in accessing the views of students who in could have been reluctant to reveal their problems or in interviewing tutors about issues that impacted on their professional practice when I was of lower status. By working within clear ethical research guidelines I was able to reassure respondents that their data would be anonymised and treated in confidence.

6.3.2 Accessing student views

One of the major limitations of this research was the short responses given by the students. The interviews had been planned to last an hour but all were much shorter. There were a number of reasons for this, not least of which was the limited English language competence of the students, although some who had good oral skills also gave short answers. The students did not volunteer information and responded only to the questions asked. It would appear that the questions did not encourage them to talk about related topics as they did for the lecturers' interviews. I was a member of staff of the college and so possibly the students did not feel empowered to change the subject and talk about what was important to them in the same way as the lecturers did.

In the planning stage of this research I had considered interviewing with the aid of an interpreter but had not taken this route partly because of the expense both in terms of time and money but also because I was worried that the act of interpretation could have subtly changed the responses. I felt that, as the students were studying in English, they should have been able to be interviewed in English. In hindsight not changing the methodology and using an interpreter was a possible loss, especially after starting to interview, when I had become aware of the limitations of data the students were providing. It would have been useful to conduct at least one interview with the aid of an interpreter and then the quality and quantity of the data could have been compared with an English-medium interview and a decision made whether to make use of interpretation on a greater scale.

Another possible method of gaining more student data would have been to use focus groups. This might have encouraged students to speak at greater length with contributions from one student inspiring contributions from another. Of course, focus groups would have been less personal and might have discouraged some students from speaking out at all, especially if they were not in agreement with a stronger personality. It would also have generated more general, less personal data which would not have necessarily fitted well with the individual case study approach. One of the major reasons why focus groups were not initially conceived as appropriate to the research

was that the research focussed on the individual student experiences rather than the general experience of a larger student body.

6.3.3 Technical Issues

The interview data was digitally recorded, though there were some technical problems, especially at the beginning of the project, resulting in some lost data. Lessons were learned from this, including the need for greater care to back-up data and check that files had been copied successfully before deleting them from the digital-recorder.

6.3.4 Timing of interviews

Another issue was that there was too long a time lapse between the student interviews. The time consuming nature of interviewing, transcribing and analysing interviews had been a major consideration in designing the interview schedule (see section 3.3.2). During the interviews, I asked students about the challenges they had faced and the experiences they had had, but because of the timescale only recent memories and thoughts which had taken place near to the time of the interview were discussed. The minor challenges and annoyances which had been resolved in the intervening time were forgotten and lost. There were two possible solutions to this, and they could have been used in conjunction with each other. The first one was to simply interview the students on a more regular basis. The second was to ask the students to keep a diary. Norton (2000) made

good use of diaries where her respondents wrote about their daily lives documenting their successes, challenges and frustrations. These diaries not only provided a record of the respondents' lives but gave a starting point for discussions and explorations of the contents. In hindsight I could have asked the students to keep a diary which might have provided a much greater insight to their student experiences. However, although this would have generated much more data, there was a danger of generating too much which could have become unmanageable. Considering the standard of the students' English writing, it could have been a time-consuming activity for the students with no reward, although the examination and discussion of the diaries could have been used to improve their writing skills. On the other hand using the diaries for teaching purposes like this could have influenced the content.

6.3.5 Extent of contact with students

I had received permission to conduct research at the college but I was not given time to do it nor was I allowed to take occasional days off. As I was manager of the ILC I was able to formally observe the students when they were in the centre and at lunch times informally observe them around the college, but the requirements of my full-time post meant that I could not observe them in the classroom. With hindsight a possible solution to this problem could have been to video the class, although this would have involved gaining the permission of everyone in the classroom. Classroom observations

would have been useful as they would have enabled me to observe the students' interactions with their lecturers and fellow students. Being unable to observe the classroom interactions directly has resulted in a loss of data. For example, the lecturers reported that the students sat apart from their peers and struggled to integrate into group work. Observations would have allowed me to explore the relationship between the seating patterns and group integration and question if the L2 students choose where to sit or was the choice made for them. It would also have allowed me to record interactions between students in terms of both social and academic interactions, allowing the exploration of who initiated interactions or erected barriers. By observing the students I would have been able to explore their classroom experience more closely and this could have led to improved interview data and the ability to investigate degrees of participation in the classroom in greater detail. While the student data was in some ways limited and restricted to the structural themes imposed by the interview questions it still produced emergent themes and proved valuable in developing my insights into the importance of relationships, identity, participation and the notions of investment and opportunity cost.

6.4 Recommendations for future research

There are a number of areas identified by in the research which have the potential to be fruitful areas of further research.

6.4.1 Professional Identity

The need to account for public spending has put educational institutions under pressure to justify spending in terms of achievement and retention rates. While there are other factors such as training and ongoing professional development involved in the formation of professional identity, I have argued that student success is important in maintaining professional identity, while lack of success can damage it (section 4.4.1). This claim would be important to research for a number of reasons including the strains which are put on student-lecturer relationships, the pressures lecturers face to pass borderline students, and how this impacts on their professional identity.

6.4.2 The opportunity costs of policy decisions

The lecturers had a busy schedule and I have argued that this led them to make decisions based on the opportunity costs around which students deserved support, who was worth investing in and who was not. These decisions were based on how well motivated and hard-working the student was perceived to be. Lecturers were prepared to give up their own time to help a student who was seen as trying to help themselves but equally a student who was seen as lazy and reliant upon others became undeserving of support. It would be worthwhile to research this decision-making process in greater depth to find out just how decisions are made as to who is deserving of support and who is not.

6.4.3 Opportunity costs of student support

Students also made decisions about support, and further research could illuminate the factors involved in this decision making process: investigating how the students' perceptions of their English language and/or academic subject competence impacts on their desire to access language support. Discovering the factors involved in this decision-making process could help colleges to provide appropriate and timely support. As well as providing a greater understanding of L2 students' decision making, this research could enable colleges to contribute more positively to L2 students' future professional identity and encourage students to invest in the support offered.

6.5 Conclusion

I considered it important to undertake this research to examine the experiences of L2 students at a further education college in Scotland because these students were perceived as not achieving their full potential. There is a gap in the research literature as most research examining the experiences of older L2 students has mainly concentrated on university students.

The research questions addressed the issues of language competence, second language support, educational expectations and L2 students' relationships with staff and students. It was found that these were all interwoven, with the theme of identity tying them together. The identities of the students impacted on every aspect of the L2 students' educational experience. How they were perceived

and how they perceived themselves impacted on whether they were able to ask for and receive support, as well as their ability to compare themselves to others to decide if they needed support.

This research has the potential to contribute to the literature in two main ways. Firstly, the research addresses the gap in the literature dealing with L2 students in further education in Scotland. This is an under researched area reflecting the historical L1 population of FE colleges in Scotland, but as demographics change and more L2 students attend further education it will increase in importance. Empirical data has been provided to help elucidate students' experience and the challenges they face.

The second contribution of the work has been to examine and develop some of the theoretical constructs which have been used to understand L2 student experience in further education. First, I have highlighted some of the complexities of initiating and sustaining the L2 students' trajectory from peripheral to full participation in educational communities of practice. The conflict and problems they experience are not only due to power relations between students and lecturers, as the reluctance of lecturers to push L2 students for fear of humiliating them may be echoed in the L1 students' reserve, and so contribute to the difficulties in forming working relationships between L2 students and staff. To be able to engage in full participation students need to develop positive subject positions which are accepted and valued by both the lecturers and other

students. Secondly, I have suggested that the economic concept of 'opportunity cost' can be added to Norton's (1995; 1997; 2000) concept of investment to explain the conflict between the needs of students' multiple subject positions (see also Grund and Fries (2012) discussed section 2.5.2). The concept of opportunity costs challenges the view that education is always intrinsically valuable and I have argued that the value of educational opportunities depends not only on students' vision of their future identity, and how any given educational opportunity contributes to that, but also on the competing needs of students' multiple subject positions as they negotiate their day-to-day lives.

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Appendices

Appendices

Contents

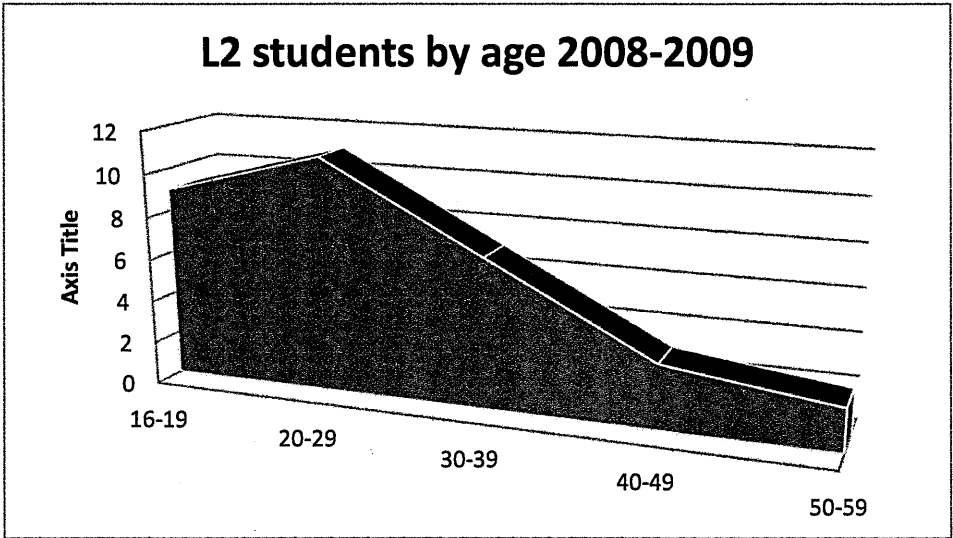
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Appendix A: College Enrolment: Statistics

| Number of students enrolments 2008 - 2009 | | | |
|---|--------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| | All students | L2 students | Percentage of L2 students |
| Full-time | 1690 | 32 | 1.89% |
| Part-time | 233 | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 1923 | 32 | 1.66% |

| L2 students age range 2008-2009 | |
|---------------------------------|----|
| 16-19 | 9 |
| 20-29 | 11 |
| 30-39 | 7 |
| 40-49 | 3 |
| 50-59 | 2 |

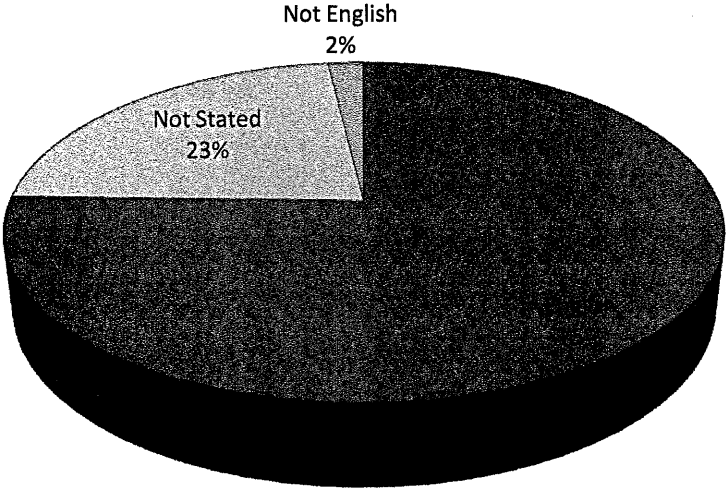
| L2 Students By Gender 2008 – 2009 | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------|------------|
| | Number | Percentage |
| Female | 19 | 59% |
| Male | 13 | 41% |
| Total | 32 | |



| Languages spoken (excluding English) 2008 - 2009 | |
|--|---|
| Polish | 4 |
| Spanish | 4 |
| Bengali | 2 |
| Chinese | 2 |
| Czech | 2 |
| Farsi | 2 |
| Filipino | 2 |
| Gujarati | 2 |
| Afrikaans | 1 |
| Bulgarian | 1 |
| Danish | 1 |
| French | 1 |
| German | 1 |
| Hungarian | 1 |
| Italian | 1 |
| Ndebele | 1 |
| Romanian | 1 |
| Sherpa | 1 |
| Tagalog | 1 |
| Thai | 1 |

| Languages spoken in college 2008 - 2009 | |
|---|------|
| English | 1276 |
| Not English | 32 |
| Not declared | 382 |

Languages spoken in college 2008-09



Appendix B: Scottish Student Awards Agency for Scotland residency criteria

To meet the general residence conditions, you must have been ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man for the three years immediately before the first day of the first academic year of the course (the relevant date). For the majority of students who start their course in the autumn term, the relevant date is 1 August.

If you are not a UK or other EU national, you must also have 'settled status' in the UK (as set out in the Immigration Act 1971) on the relevant date. To find out about getting settled status, you can visit the Home Office website or phone their helpline on 0870 6067766. If you have not been living in the UK, you may still qualify depending on your circumstances.

You must also be ordinarily resident in Scotland on the relevant date, unless you are an English, Northern Irish or Welsh domiciled student taking a degree course in one of the Allied Health Professions. In this case, you must be ordinarily resident in your home country at the time you apply for your first years support.

http://www.saas.gov.uk/student_support/residence_conditions.htm (accessed 20/09/10)

Appendix C: Core-skill Diagnostic Test

All students (both L1 & L2) undertook a computer based core-skill diagnostic test either before enrolment or in the first week of their course. The test was designed by PLATO and was issued free to Scottish colleges by the Scottish Funding Council in 2003. There were three sections to the test: literacy, numeracy and ICT. This appendix will deal only with the literacy test which was used as indicator of literacy level.

The literacy test comprised of an initial set of questions at Access 3 level (see illustrations below). If the student completed these successfully they would then be given further questions which increased in difficulty until the student either completed the test or was offering wrong answers. If the student did not complete the initial questions successfully then they were given easier questions. In either case when the test was complete the student was given a grade which stated that they were ready for a level (see illustration 4).

This test gave a general level and was not capable of giving detailed feedback on the areas that the student needed to improve. The possible results were ready for: Access 2; Access 3; Intermediate 1; Intermediate 2; Higher.

Core Skills Preparation ● Questions Answered

Communication 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Below on the left is a list of six words, and on the right are their meanings, which are not in the correct order. Click on the meanings and drag them into place to match the words.

| | |
|--------------|-------------------|
| 1. degrade | to reduce |
| 2. skewer | wood or metal rod |
| 3. assurance | to be confident |
| 4. dejected | to be sad |
| 5. pompous | self-important |
| 6. vanquish | to conquer |

Navigation icons: back, help, home, calculator, forward

file:///C:/CoreSkills/communication/nIntutor.htm

23/09/2013

Core Skills Preparation ● Questions Answered

Communication 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Drag and drop one of the words in on a green background to fill the blank spaces in the sentences.

to

two

too

1. I am walking the cinema.

2. Can I go ?

3. One or sugars in your tea?

Navigation icons: help, home, calculator, forward

file:///C:/CoreSkills/communication/nIntutor.htm

23/09/2013

Core Skills Preparation **Questions Answered**

Communication 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

On the left of the screen there is a list of words and on the right are their meanings, which are not in the correct order. Click on the meanings and drag them into place to match the words.

| | |
|------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. irrepressible | impossible to control |
| 2. archetype | original pattern or model |
| 3. adulterate | to make impure |
| 4. enmity | hatred or ill will |
| 5. poignant | deeply affecting |
| 6. acquiesce | to comply tacitly |

Navigation icons: back, help, home, calculator, forward.

file:///C:/CoreSkills/communication/nltutor.htm

23/09/2013

Core Skills Preparation **Questions Answered**

Communication 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Thank you for taking the test.
You are now ready for Higher.

First name

Last name

Class Code

Enter your name and Class Code; then click on this text to print the screen

Navigation icons: help, calculator, forward.

file:///C:/CoreSkills/communication/nltutor.htm

23/09/2013

Appendix D: Individual Student course performance data

Bijon

| Course Attendance - Bijon | | |
|--|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Course | Bijon's attendance | Average course attendance |
| 2007/08 Certificate in Business and Information Technology | 70.84% | 80.54% |
| 2008/09 HNC Accounting | 77.33% | 82.41% |
| 2009/10 HND Accounting | 70.66% | 77.25% |
| Average attendance | 72.94% | 80.07% |

| Course Attainment - Bijon | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|------------|-------|-----------|-------------|------|-----------|
| Bijon | | Bijon %age | | | Course %age | | |
| Course | Number of units | Pass | Fail | withdrawn | Pass | Fail | withdrawn |
| 2007-2008 Cert in Business and IT | 18 | 100% | 0% | 0% | 80% | 12% | 8% |
| 2008-2009 HNC Accounting | 12 | 100% | 0% | 0% | 93% | 7% | 0% |
| Graded Unit | Bijon | C | | | | | |
| | Percent with | A | 29% | | | | |
| | Percent with | B | 21% | | | | |
| | Percent with | C | 43% | | | | |
| | Percent with | F | 7% | | | | |
| 2009 - 2010 HND Accounting | 12 | 100% | 0% | 0% | 78% | 3% | 19% |
| Graded Unit | Bijon | C | | | | | |
| | Percent with | A | 16.5% | | | | |
| | Percent with | B | 28.0% | | | | |
| | Percent with | C | 28.0% | | | | |
| | Percent with | F | 16.5% | | | | |

Katarzyna

| Course Attendance - Katarzyna | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Course | Kataryna's attendance | Average course attendance |
| 2008/09 HNC Accounting | 97.33% | 82.41% |
| Average attendance | 97.33% | 82..41% |

| Course Attainment - Katarzyna | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|------|-----------|-------------|------|-----------|
| Kataryna | | Kataryna %age | | | Course %age | | |
| Course | Number of units | Pass | Fail | withdrawn | Pass | Fail | withdrawn |
| 2008-2009 HNC Accounting | 12 | 100% | 0% | 0% | 93% | 7% | 0% |
| Graded Unit | Katarina | C | | | | | |
| | % with | A | 29% | | | | |
| | % with | B | 21% | | | | |
| | % with | C | 43% | | | | |
| | % with | F | 7% | | | | |

Dita

| Course Attendance - Dita | | |
|--|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Course | Dita's attendance | Average course attendance |
| 2008-2009 Intermediate 1 Childcare Units | 89.06% | 82.04% |
| 2009-2010 Health & Social Studies | 92.06% | 84.71% |
| Average attendance | 90.56% | 82.38% |

| Course Attainment - Dita | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------|-----------|------|-----------|-------------|------|------------|
| Dita | | Dita %age | | | Course %age | | |
| Course | Number of units | Pass | Fail | withdrawn | Pass | Fail | with drawn |
| 2008 -2009 Intermediate 1 Childcare Units | 12 | 100% | 0% | 0% | 88% | 9% | 3% |
| 2009 - 2010 Health & Social Studies | 16 | 1% | 0% | 0% | 60% | 11% | 29% |

Amy

| Course Attendance - Amy | | |
|---|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Course | Amy's attendance | Average course attendance |
| 2008-2009 Intermediate 2 Care with Childcare Options | 94.92% | 71.40% |
| 2009-2010 NC Early Education and Childcare | 96.77% | 87.67% |
| Average attendance | 95.85% | 79.53% |

| Course Attainment - Amy | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------|----------|------|-----------|-------------|------|------------|
| Amy | | Amy %age | | | Course %age | | |
| Course | Number of units | Pass | Fail | withdrawn | Pass | Fail | withd rawn |
| 2008 - 2009 Int 2 Childcare | 11 | 82% | 0% | 18% | 58% | 21% | 21% |
| 2009 - 2010 NC Early Education | 15 | 67% | 20% | 13% | 71% | 7% | 22% |

Gagan

| Course Attendance - Gagan | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Course | Gagan's attendance | Average course attendance |
| 2008-2009 NC Art & Design | 97.54% | 74.90% |
| Average attendance | 97.54% | 74.90% |

| Course Attainment - Gagan | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|------------|------|-----------|-------------|------|------------|
| Gagan | | Gagan %age | | | Course %age | | |
| Course | Number of units | Pass | Fail | withdrawn | Pass | Fail | with drawn |
| 2008 - 2009 NC Art & Design | 10 | 100% | 0% | 0% | 89% | 5% | 6% |

Appendix E: Interview Questions

First Interview questions for Students

1. Where do you come from?
2. How long have you been learning/speaking English?
3. Do you speak any other languages?
4. What level of education did you get to in your own country?
5. What course are you on?
6. Is this your first choice?
7. Why do you want to study this subject?
8. Have you had to overcome any difficulties to come to college?
9. Did you expect to face these difficulties?
10. Are there any differences in the way we teach in Scotland from the way you were taught in your own country?
11. Can you tell me about how you get on in your lessons?
12. Have you done any assignments yet?
13. Were you happy with the feedback?
14. Can you tell me about how you get on with your class mates?
15. Can you tell me about how you feel about the college facilities?
16. Have you used the student support services?
17. Did you get the support you needed?
18. Is there any support / facility that isn't offered that you feel would be helpful to you?

Second interview questions for students

1. Do you think in English?
2. How is the course going now?
3. Do you think you are going to pass?
4. Are you having any problems?
5. What have you done to solve these problems?
6. Is there anything you need which is not being done to help?
7. What advice would you give to a student from your country who wanted to study at the college?
8. Is there anything they could do to prepare for studying here?
9. Now that you have been at the college for almost a year is there anything you have noticed is different about studying here rather than in your own country?
10. Have you done a written assessment?
11. What grade did you get?
12. How did you feel about the feedback you received?
13. Was there anything you didn't understand about the feedback?
14. Have you brought the essay with you today? Can I talk about it with you?

Interview questions for staff

1. How many 2nd language students are you teaching this year?
2. Is this more or less than previous years?
3. Do you think the level of students' English was good enough at the start of their course? What about now?
4. Do students come to college with the appropriate prerequisite knowledge required for the course?
5. Have you noticed different cultural expectations when you have been working with the students?
6. How do the students appear to get on with their class mates?
7. How do you feel the students are coping with their course?
8. Do you feel that they are working to their full potential? Why do you feel this?
9. Does the quantity of support required by 2nd language students differ from the native students?
10. What about the type of support – is that different?
11. Do you feel that you have the time/resources to give all the support you would like to give?
12. Is there any other support that you think the college could/should provide that it isn't doing at the moment?
13. Is there anything you feel the college could do to support lecturers to support the student?
14. If you were asked to give advice to a new lecturer who was worried because they had a 2nd language student in their class is there any advice you would give them?

Appendix F: Sample of Learning Centre Observation Data.

ILC Observation: 2nd April 2009

Subject: Dita

Duration 43 mins

Dita is working with tutor on scheduled appointment.

Nature of support: Proofreading

| Time | Activity |
|---------|--|
| 0-5 | Both sit at round table in ILC (no computer). Exchange of pleasantries and discussion of theatre show tutor has attended. |
| 5 -12 | Dita has produced an essay – printed. Tutor reads it. |
| 12- 40 | Tutor goes through essay with Dita picking out grammatical mistakes and rephrasing where necessary. Tutor writes on printed copy. Loudness of |
| 15 – 17 | voices vary and sometimes it is difficult to hear. |
| 18 -20 | Tutor explains subject-verb agreement |
| 24 - 35 | Tutor points out missing articles – Dita comments that she know about this but keeps forgetting. Tutor asks Dita what she means. Tutor appears to rewrite section. She goes over what she has written with Dita. Voices low can't really hear what is being said. |
| 40 - 43 | Dita thanks tutor. Arranges an appointment for the following week. Departs ILC. |

Appendix G: College Documents

a) International Students' Guide

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LIVING, STUDY & CULTURE

Culture

The Arts contribute greatly to the culture of [redacted] and the wider region, which in turn impacts on the quality of life. There are many cultural experiences for you to enjoy in [redacted], including:

- Visual arts - galleries and moving image;
- Creative industries - design and craft;
- Libraries, literature, writing, publishing and language;
- Museums, archaeology, local history, archives and genealogy;
- Events and festivals;
- Performing arts - theatre, drama, dance and music;
- Cultural infrastructure - public art.

Admission to many museums and galleries is free. Each town of any size and many villages have their own museums, displaying historical and social artefacts from the area. Many historic buildings and monuments are open to the public. The following website provides you a database with up to date information on all events happening throughout the region: www.community.net/community/whats.aspx.

Social life



You will definitely find something enjoyable to do in your spare time, such as: join societies and clubs, participate in sports and activities, visit the cinema, theatre, museums and galleries, enjoy the many bars and restaurants, walks and tours, gardens and forestry, lochs and beaches and so much more.

Every student enrolled at College is automatically a member of the Student Association (SA), which will give you a focal point for student activity within College. The SA also assists students to develop an entertainment programme throughout the year and can also help you to set up any sporting activities or clubs or Societies you would like to see running within College. [redacted] Multicultural Association (MCA) is an organisation open to all members of ethnic, religious and cultural minority communities in our region, to help people to integrate into Scottish society and play their full part. Membership of the MCA is free for any individual and groups from ethnic and cultural minorities in [redacted]. You might meet people from your own country at the MCA centre and enjoy a variety of activities arranged by the Association!

Weather

Scotland has a temperate climate; generally temperatures in Scotland are a few degrees cooler than in England. July and August are normally the warmest months in [redacted]. [redacted] maximum temperatures are usually around 25 degrees. January and February are the coldest months, the average temperature falls to between 2 and 8 degrees, and you may see snow sometimes. [redacted] is usually a mixture of sunny days, rainy days, windy days and calm days at any time throughout the year, and it's even possible to have all four seasons in one day! You can find weather facts for [redacted] on www.scotland-screen.com/weather.

Healthcare

Scotland has advanced medical facilities. If you are from an EEA country or a student on a course lasting more than 6 months you will qualify for medical and hospital treatment under the National Health Service (NHS). The NHS is free of charge, although there is a fixed cost for any medication you may need from the pharmacy. An NHS dentist is very hard to find and you may want to consider taking out insurance to cover the costs of a private dentist. If you complete an HC1 form you will be able to find out if you are eligible for free prescriptions and dental treatment. Forms are available from the International Office at College. Once you arrive in the UK log on to www.nhs.uk to find your nearest GP (doctor) and register immediately. In case of an emergency you should call 999 for an ambulance, fire or police.

LIVING, STUDY & CULTURE continued

coffee making facilities, refrigerator, and microwave. [redacted] can also offer self-catering colleges to mature students.

[redacted] deals with all bookings for College accommodation. [redacted] can be contacted by e-mail [redacted] or by telephone [redacted].

Accommodation provided by private landlords or external organisations: This accommodation you will be able to find and arrange by yourself. Most rental properties are advertised in local newspapers and on the internet so this is a good place to look.

[redacted] College can supply an up to date list of local accommodation providers which you can request from the Student Advisers or International Offices. Please note any students using local accommodation will need to enter into a written agreement with the proprietor regarding cost, deposit, and rules etc and not with the College itself.

If you are requiring assistance to book or locate suitable rented accommodation, please contact International Officer [redacted] on [redacted].

College accommodation in a self-catering hall of residence costs from £200 to £300 per month. For private accommodation in a bed-sit or a room in a house or flat shared with other students you would pay from £200 to £400 per month. For students with families, a house or flat with two- or three-bedrooms at a cost of £550 to £600 per month. In most cases accommodation provided by the College has to be arranged before you come to Scotland.

Cost of living

[redacted] is a safe and low cost region for international students to live compared with living in big cities in Scotland. Your cost of living of course will also depend on your chosen lifestyle.

The UK Border Agency requires international students to have £600 every month to cover their living cost if studying a course nine months or less outside of London; or have at least £5400 per year's maintenance funds if studying a course more than nine months outside of London; plus £335 per month per dependent.

The following price guide will give you some ideas of the cost of daily life, the prices may vary slightly depending on where you shop.

| | |
|------------------------------------|---------------|
| • Can of Coke | 50p |
| • Bottle of Water | 60p |
| • Litre of Milk | 75p |
| • Pint of Beer | £2.50 |
| • Bottle of Wine | £5 |
| • Loaf of Bread | £1 |
| • Burger and Fries | £3.50 |
| • Lunch (Sandwich and a drink) | £3.50 |
| • College's hot meal | £3.50 |
| • Textbook | £20 |
| • Newspaper | 50p |
| • Hairdresser - Men | £10 |
| • Hairdresser - Women | £20 |
| • Bed and Breakfast (Guest House) | £25 per night |
| • Restaurant Meal | £15 |
| • Bus fare | £1 |
| • Train from Dumfries to Edinburgh | |
| - off peak day return | £27.80 |
| • Pair of Jeans | £40 |
| • Pair of Shoes | £75 |
| • Cinema | £4.50 |

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WHY STUDY HERE?

Scotland is renowned for the high standards of its education system in the world. For more than 200 years, a Scottish education has been among the best preparations for life and work. There are two reasons for this. The first is that Scots have long seen education as the embodiment of democracy, giving people at all levels of society the opportunity to increase their knowledge, earning potential and status. The second is the structure of the Scottish education system, which was adopted by both the French and American systems.

The emphasis has long been on learning rather than teaching, using trained and dedicated graduates. The Scottish system emphasises vocational training, science and technology.

Scotland, with 13 universities and more than 55 colleges of further and higher education, produces the highest number of graduates per head of population in the European Union.

From 2005 international students have the chance to apply for two years' Post Study work visa, staying in the UK after they complete a Higher National Diploma course in Scotland. This Tier 1 Post-Study work category in the UKBA's new point system aims to retain the most international graduates who have studied in the UK. It enhances Scotland's overall offer to international students. The successful applicants will be free to seek employment without having a sponsor for the duration of their Post-Study work. This opportunity also provides a bridge to highly skilled or skilled work.

Scottish people are famous for their hospitality and friendliness, and there is no difference in how international visitors are always warmly welcomed by local people and the region also boasts diverse communities, which makes it a very cosmopolitan and comfortable place to live.

It is also a safe and low cost region for international students to live compared with living in big cities in Scotland. It has excellent road and rail services provide fast and efficient travel throughout the United Kingdom.

The primary town of the region is Glasgow, which is only one or two hours travel away from major cities such as Glasgow, Edinburgh, Newcastle and Cardiff.

Studying in the newly recognised University Town of Glasgow

international students can obtain desired undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications without leaving the area.

The Colleges

Glasgow College and Edinburgh College are in the scenic rolling landscape of the Scottish Lowlands, which have been well known for quality education and training for over 30 years. The two Colleges serve completely different industries with stimulating curriculum, which work synergically to help international students experience the best of Scottish education and to equip them for success in our modern and fast changing world.

Glasgow College is located at Glasgow Campus on Glasgow Road. Edinburgh College is situated on George Street, only 10 miles from Glasgow in Scotland (see map on page 1). From Glasgow, you can easily travel to major cities and airports, you can easily travel to Glasgow from the following airports:

- Glasgow International Airport: www.glasgowairport.com, one and half hours' travel to Glasgow.
- Edinburgh Airport: www.edinburghairport.com, two hours' travel to Glasgow.
- Newcastle International Airport: www.newcastleairport.com, two hours' travel to Glasgow.
- Manchester Airport: www.manchesterairport.co.uk, three hours' travel to Glasgow.

Train and bus stations offer convenient services to the above airports, the rest of Scotland and mainland UK.

UK Rail Information:
www.rail.co.uk, www.nationalrail.co.uk

UK Coach Information:
www.nationalexpress.co.uk

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HOW TO APPLY

[redacted] and [redacted] College's courses begin in August each year. We strongly recommend you to submit your application as soon as possible in the year prior to your intended course start date to avoid disappointment (for all courses).

Following up the required paperwork, references or online interview always takes longer than you think, so the earlier you apply the better! You should certainly have completed your application by the end of April, including all paperwork required and application fee transactions. This will allow us to help your visa application and accommodation throughout May, June and July before you come to Scotland.

Contact details:

International Admission help:

[redacted] International Officer

Telephone: [redacted]

Email: [redacted]

Telephone: [redacted]

Email: [redacted]

Six easy steps to enrolment

1. Choose a course;
2. Complete your chosen College's International Application Form, return to us with your background information as stated on the application form and pay your application fee.
3. If you fully meet the entry requirements for your chosen course you will receive an unconditional offer letter from College. You must confirm if you would like to accept our offer.
4. You will receive a College visa letter (or CAS) upon your confirmation of acceptance. You can now apply for a student visa through British Embassy or High Commission Office.
5. Inform us of your arrival details, pay your outstanding tuition fees and book your accommodation.
6. You will be welcomed to the College, enrolled to the programme and join the course induction process.

VISAS & IMMIGRATION

Do you need to apply for a visa for your study?

Your nearest British Council office will be able to advise you on whether or not you need to apply for a visa for entry into the UK. An easy way to find this out is to consult the official British Government's website for visa services: www.ukvisas.gov.uk. You can complete an online interactive questionnaire - "Do I need a UK visa?" to find out if you will need a visa to come to the United Kingdom for study. More information and guidance about which nationalities need UK visas to enter or transit the United Kingdom is also available on the website.

Applying for a visa

If you are from a visa national country, it is compulsory for you to apply for entry clearance in the form of a visa before your travel to the UK. From 31st March 2009, students intending to study in the UK for a full-time course six months or longer will have to apply for a 'General Student' visa under Tier 4 of the new points based system and dependents will have to apply as PBS dependants.

In order to obtain a Tier 4 General Student visa, you will need to score at least 40 points to meet the criteria, which consists of 30 points for a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) from the College, and 10 points for Maintenance (funds) assessment. However, if you are coming to the UK for less than six months and do not intend to work or extend your stay, you may also enter as a Student Visitor.

You must apply for a visa at a UK visa application centre in your own country. You can get an application form, free of charge, from your nearest visa application centre or British Missions Overseas (UK embassies, high commissions and consulates) that offer a visa service, or you can download the form that you need from the www.ukvisas.gov.uk website.

Once you have all the appropriate forms and have filled them in carefully, you must submit them to the visa application centre or British Mission together with your passport, photographs, fee and relevant supporting documentation.

Further advice is available from the visa application centre or British Mission, but you will certainly need to take the following important documents with you:

- A Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) from the College
- Evidence that you can pay your course fees and support yourself while studying (e.g. bank statements, or letters of sponsorship)
- Full details of the course fees (e.g. College's invoice), and receipt for any payment of your tuition fees from the College if you paid any fees in advance

Important

You must keep us informed of the progress of your visa application, and should note that we are unable to enter into correspondence to support your student visa application beyond the provision of the CAS and receipt of your application fee payment.

Before You Travel

You will need to make sure you have the following with you before your departure to the UK:

- Valid Passport and Visa (if required);
- Air ticket (check dates and flights);
- College's offer letter/CAS;
- Accommodation booking information and receipt (if you have one);
- UK Currency (bank draft or travellers' cheques);
- Travel insurance (yourself and luggage);
- Medical insurance (if required);
- Phone number for College International Office +44 [redacted] or +44 [redacted];
- Your original school academic certificates and transcripts.

You are advised to arrive in [redacted] a few days before your course's start date to allow you find your way about and familiarise yourself with your new surroundings.

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INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SUPPORT

We recognise the particular needs of International Students in meeting the challenges of studying in a foreign country. We provide a number of specialist services in helping you to settle in and feel fully integrated into life in College and in Scotland.

We provide the following support and services for international students:

- **Prior to Arrival:** course information, admission advice, progression, work opportunities, visa application, finance, accommodation and airport collection arrangement.
- **Post Arrival:** enrolment, welcome and induction to the College, police registration, opening an International Student Account, register a GP, visa extension, ongoing course advice and working in the UK information.

International enquiries contact:
international@sc.ac.uk,
international@sc.nhs.uk

English Language

College offers an International English Language course, which is designed for those who wish to improve their English language skills for academic purposes.

This full-time course consists of two certificated English language programmes: a Scottish Qualification for general everyday use of English and an IELTS for academic study purposes.

The International English course also includes training in IT skills, research skills and a programme of Scottish history and culture, including excursions and events. One of which incorporates Information Technology, study of Scottish history and culture and includes excursions and events.

After completing the one academic year's course, students will be prepared to progress to a Higher Education course at the College, for instance an HNC or HND course and then on to a degree level at University, providing all other entry requirements are met. Students can apply anytime in a year, the College has January and August sessions for students to enrol on...



College Full-time Programmes For Tier 4 General Students

College offers a wide range of courses from Access to Further Education to HNC and HND level courses. We also provide routes to enable international students to articulate to degree and postgraduate qualifications. If you are an international applicant from non-EEA countries, please find details of available courses below:

| Programme | Course | Level | Progression |
|--|---|-------|--|
| Creative Industries | HNC Visual Communication | 7 | HND at [redacted] College |
| | HND Visual Communication | 8 | 3rd year of related degree courses at University |
| | HNC Photography | 7 | HND at [redacted] College |
| | HND Photography | 8 | 3rd year of related degree courses at University |
| | HNC Art & Design | 7 | HND at [redacted] College |
| | HND Art & Design | 8 | 3rd year of related degree courses at University |
| Business | Higher Business Management & Information Technology | 6 | HNC at [redacted] College |
| | HNC Administration & Information Technology | 7 | HND at [redacted] College |
| | HND Administration & Information Technology | 8 | 3rd year of related degree courses at University |
| | HNC Accounting | 7 | HND at [redacted] College |
| | HND Accounting | 8 | 3rd year of related degree courses at University |
| Health and Social Studies | Health & Social Studies | 6 | Higher or HNC at [redacted] College |
| | Higher Health & Social Care Programmes | 6 | HNC at [redacted] College |
| | Higher Social Care | 6 | HNC at [redacted] College |
| | HNC Social Care | 7 | HND at [redacted] College |
| | HND Social Care (This course will run subject to number of successful applicants) | 8 | HE at University |
| Hairdressing, Beauty and Complementary Therapies | Beauty: Higher Level | 6 | HNC at [redacted] College |
| | Higher Beauty Care | 6 | HNC at [redacted] College |
| | HNC Beauty Therapy | 7 | HND at [redacted] College |
| | HND Beauty Therapy | 8 | Educational or training institution |
| | Hairdressing: Higher Level | 6 | Educational or training institution |
| Hospitality | SVO 3 Professional Cookery | 6/7 | HNC at [redacted] College |
| | HNC Professional Cookery | 7 | 2nd year of related degree courses at University |
| | HNC Hospitality Operations | 7 | HND at [redacted] College |
| | HND Hospitality Management (This course will run subject to number of successful applicants) | 8 | 3rd year of related degree courses at University |

College Full-time Programmes For Tier 4 General Students

| Programme | Course | Level | Entry Requirements |
|--------------------|--|---------|---|
| Computing | HNC Computing | 7 | HND at [redacted] College |
| | HND Computing: Technical Support | 8 | 3rd year of related degree courses at University |
| | HNC Interactive Media | 7 | 2nd year of related degree courses at University |
| Sport & Recreation | BTEC Level 3 National Diploma in Sport | 6 | HNC at [redacted] College |
| | HNC Sport & Recreation Management | 7 | HND at [redacted] College |
| | HND Sport & Recreation Management | 8 | 3rd year of related degree courses at University |
| Education Studies | NC Early Education & Childcare | 6 | HNC at [redacted] College |
| | HNC Early Education & Childcare | 7 | 2nd year of related degree courses at University |
| Construction | HNC Construction | 7 | 2nd year of related degree courses at University |
| Engineering | HNC Electrical Engineering | 7 | 2nd year of related degree courses at University |
| Language Courses | International English Course (January and August sessions) | CEFR A2 | HNC or HND mainstream course at [redacted] College or a degree course at University |

For course information and entry requirements please download the College Prospectus from the College website: [www.\[redacted\].ac.uk](http://www.[redacted].ac.uk)

English Language Requirement for Entry

The applicant who applies for a full-time SCQF level 6, 7 or 8 course must supply an International English Language Test Score (IELTS) certificate with a minimum score of 6.0 or alternative proof of English Language proficiency (e.g. Cambridge exam, PTE Academic, TOEFL, test of English or Study of English), if English is spoken as a second language. The applicant who applies for English language course must supply an IELTS certificate with a minimum score of 3.5 or alternative proof of English Language proficiency or satisfy the equivalent entry standard assessed by the college's ESOL tutor, if English is spoken as a second language.

International Fee

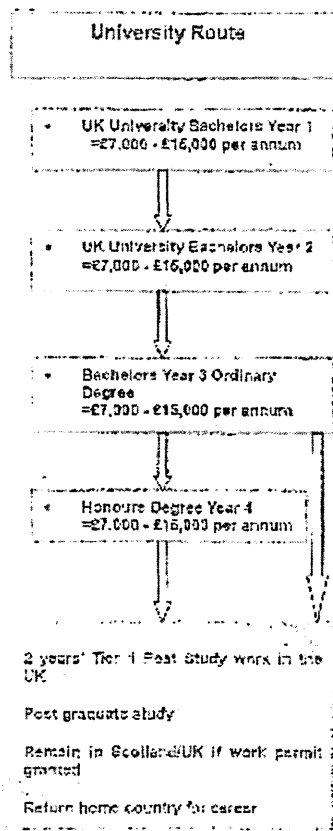
[redacted] College's International Fee is £5000 per annum for any courses at SCQF level 6, 7 or 8. Any international students who successfully completed the first year's studies at [redacted] will be entitled the discounted tuition fee - £3500 for the second year. The International English language course is £2500 per annum.

Progression Routes and Opportunities

University Route

- Tier 1 Post Study work in the UK Year 1
- Tier 1 Post Study work in the UK Year 2
- Remains in Scotland/UK if work permit granted
- Switch back to Tier 4 Student visa without return to home country
- Return home country for career

Progression to University



College's Formal Articulation with the University of

Achievement of HND programmes will often enable students to progress into the 2nd or final year of a degree course at a number of universities. College has formal articulation arrangements with **University of** as in the diagram below, but students may be able to apply to other universities.


| HND Programme | University of Degree Programme | University of Degree Programme |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| HND Computing Technical Support | BSc Computer Networking BSc IT BSc Business Technology | MSc Management MSc IT MSc Project Management |
| HND Administration & IT | BSc Business Technology BSc IT BA Business Studies BA Human Resource Management BA International Marketing | MSc IT MSc Project Management MSc Management MSc Multimedia with Web Authoring MSc International Marketing MSc IT MSc Logistics & Supply Chain Management |
| HND Hospitality Management | BA Business Studies BA Hospitality Management | MSc Management MSc Quality Management MSc International Marketing |
| HND Accounting | BAcc Accounting | MSc International Financial Management MSc Management MSc IT |
| HND Sport & Recreation Management | BSc Sport Development | MSc International Marketing MSc Management MSc IT MSc Multimedia with Web Authoring |

For the International Fee for UWS route please contact: International@wales.ac.uk or **01904 555555**

b) College Assessment Policy



ASSESSMENT AND RE-ASSESSMENT POLICY

| | | |
|----------------|---|--|
| Strategic Aim | To provide high quality, flexible learning opportunities to enable learners to achieve, progress and attain in terms of their personal, social, academic and vocational development | |
| Responsibility | Assistant Principal, Quality & Estates |  |
| Revision Date | 5/07/11 | |

| | |
|---|--|
| Reference No. | SAP/PC/00000001 |
| Issued By | Assistant Principal, Quality & Estates |
| Date | 1/1/11 |
| PLEASE NOTE: DOCUMENT UNCONTROLLED WHEN PRINTED | |

ASSESSMENT AND RE-ASSESSMENT POLICY

POLICY

The principles of assessment are defined by SQA as:

Our primary role is the assessment of learning against national standards to provide individuals with worthwhile qualifications that meet their educational and training needs. We have to ensure that the assessment of our qualifications is credible with our users, partner organisations and the wider community. To be credible, all assessments that contribute to an SQA qualification must be:

- valid
- reliable
- practicable
- equitable and fair

Whether the assessment is administered through pen and paper examinations, oral questioning, practical tests, computer assisted tests, or any other means, the principles remain the same.

REFERENCES

Assessment and Quality Assurance (SQA June 2010)
 Guidelines on On line Assessment for Further Education (SQA March 2003)
 Guidance on Assessment Arrangements (SQA January 2010)
 Frequently Asked Questions (College Document)
 Quality Policy
 External Moderation Procedure
 Internal Moderation Procedure
 Assessment Appeals Procedure
 Programme Assessment Board Procedure
 Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Additional Support Needs Procedure

ASSESSMENT

Assessment is either formative or summative.

Formative Assessment is used as a means of preparing students for undertaking summative assessment. This may be in the form of question and answer sheets or a written/practical exercise based on the requirements of the summative assessment.

Summative Assessment is the internally devised or the awarding body devised instrument of assessment e.g. Assessment Support Pack (ASP), administered by the college to measure candidates attainment of knowledge and skills against qualification standards. Where there is more than one approved assessment the team should agree which one is to be administered.

Where instruments of assessments have been developed internally, these should be moderated in accordance with Internal Moderation Procedure and approved by Moderation Groups.

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It is strongly recommended that college devised instruments of assessments be prior moderated by the awarding body prior to delivery. Monitoring visits from Awarding Bodies will check that assessment decisions meet national standards.

Prior to the start of the course or programme of study, the overall loading of assessments for the course should be considered and an assessment timetable should be agreed with the course team/moderation group. Any subsequent changes should be agreed with class members.

Each student will be given appropriate evaluative written feedback whether a pass or fail which will be supplemented by verbal feedback, where appropriate and within agreed timescale. This will be checked during internal moderation or verification. Marked assessments/re-assessments should be returned to students within two weeks of submission.

Students should be advised that all assessment decisions are subject to internal and/or external moderation.

Where a student is judged competent they will receive a "pass".

Where a student is judged not competent and there are no exceptional circumstances they will receive appropriate support and a owed one re-assessment opportunity.

RE-SCHEDULING OF ASSESSMENTS

In exceptional circumstances assessments and re-assessments may be re-scheduled without being counted as a first attempt, where for example:

- A candidate is absent due to sickness, bereavement or family commitments. Proof of absence may be required e.g. sick note, self certification
- Candidate becoming unwell during an assessment
- Equipment failure
- Fire Alarm
- Loss of Utility Power
- Hazardous Events

The course team members must agree exceptional circumstances.

The majority of assessment and re-assessment activity must be completed by the last 2 weeks of the teaching in block 1 and moderated as per the sampling schedule. For block 2, assessment and re-assessment activity must be completed and moderated by 31st May and the results passed to the relevant Programme Assessment Board. Exceptions to this deadline may include Graded Units or Integrated Project Based units. Where assessment evidence is not available until the last two weeks of the teaching in block 2, the Moderation Group Leader may apply retrospective moderation, where appropriate.

Student Achievement: It is the responsibility of everyone involved in the assessment process to ensure that all information on student achievement is timeously passed to Student Records to allow processing of results to relevant Awarding Bodies for certification within agreed timescales. For Open College Network (OCN), a separate Quality Review Process applies.

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PROGRAMME ASSESSMENT BOARD

When all assessments and re-assessments for the award have been completed, the Programme Assessment Board will meet to confirm results. For further information please refer to Programme Assessment Board Procedure.

LATE SUBMISSION OF WORK

1. Where work is submitted late and the circumstances are considered by the course team to be exceptional the work will be:

- a) accepted as first submission and
- b) may be considered for merit (agreed by course team)

A late submission form will be required from the student. The personal tutor will retain this.

2. Where work is submitted late and the circumstances are not considered to be exceptional the work will be:

- a) accepted as second submission
- b) will not be considered for merit

A late submission form will be required from the student. The personal tutor will retain a copy of this.

Late submission forms will act as a signal to the tutor that intervention is required - this should be supportive. Where several late submission forms are received from a student and no exceptional circumstances have been agreed, the course team may recommend disciplinary action.

Where students fail to meet a second submission deadline and there are no exceptional circumstances agreed, this should be recorded as a fail. The student should then be advised of their right to appeal (Student Assessment Appeals Procedure).

Guidelines for the late submission of work will be issued as a separate instruction to students (see late submission form).

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is the use of another person's work for personal advantage without the proper acknowledgement of the original work, with the intention of passing it off as your own. Plagiarism may occur deliberately (with the intention to deceive); or accidentally (due to poor referencing). Plagiarism is a form of cheating.

The following are examples of plagiarism:

- Including parts of someone else's work in your own without identifying the source. This includes cutting and pasting information from the Internet.

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- Using work done by another person submitting it as your own.
- Giving someone your work to copy from.

Plagiarism is serious as it may result in a student receiving a higher grade than s/he would have received without the inclusion of the plagiarised material. Anyone involved in plagiarism will be dealt with through the Student Discipline Procedure and may result in the student's failure to complete the course.

MALPRACTICE

Students may be guilty of malpractice for example when they:

- Use unauthorised aids:- calculators, notes, mobile telephones etc
- Copy from another person
- Plagiarise
- Behave in a disruptive manner

The above list of malpractice examples is not exhaustive. The College Management will discuss issues of malpractice in each individual circumstance. Anyone found to be guilty of malpractice will be dealt with through the Student Discipline Procedure and may result in the student failing to complete the course.

RETENTION OF ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE

Providing Internal Moderation has taken place, no notice of Retrospective Moderation has been received and no student assessment appeals are pending, assessed work with completion dates up to the end of February, should be retained until 1st April. Assessed work, with completion dates up to the end of July, should be retained until 1st November.

Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs)


In the case of SVQs and NVQs the assessed work may need to be retained until the appropriate disposal date following the finish date for the assessment of the whole VQ. Centres should keep all evidence until 3 weeks after the completion date. This is the date you gave when entering the candidates for the qualification. If a centre is contacted by an external verifier, the centre must retain the evidence until verification takes place, ideally the evidence must be kept until you receive a successful verification report. In case of any doubt, assessment evidence must be retained rather than disposed of. For further information please refer to the individual subject specific assessment strategy.

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c) College Student Discipline Procedure


 QUALITY


STUDENT DISCIPLINE PROCEDURE

| | |
|------------------|---------------------------------|
| Management Area | Strategic Management |
| Reference Number | PRO/01/002/005 |
| Responsibility | Assistant Principal, Curriculum |

| Revision Date | Details | Approved By |
|---------------|--------------|--|
| 31/10/2002 | First Issue |  |
| 21/08/2003 | Second Issue |  |
| 20/10/2003 | Third Issue |  |
| 26/07/2006 | Fourth Issue |  |
| 3/02/2009 | Fifth Issue |  |
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STUDENT DISCIPLINE PROCEDURE

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide an open and fair process for dealing with student misconduct, student misbehaviour or course related student performance

2 SCOPE

- 2.1 Any student studying or registered at Dumfries and Galloway College shall be subject to disciplinary procedures. It is expected however that the majority of problems can be dealt with informally and without recourse to formal procedure
- 2.2 In circumstances where students have a physical, mental or other disability, which may manifest itself in behaviour, which in usual circumstances would be seen as misconduct, reasonable adjustments will be made and appropriate support provided. Where appropriate, reasonable adjustment to the procedure will be made
- 2.3 In circumstances where students have a language or communication difficulty, for example where English is not their first language, additional support may be provided and where appropriate reasonable adjustment made to the procedure
- 2.4 It is the College's normal practice to issue a report to the student's employer/school or managing agent under this procedure **only where** the student has their course funded or sponsored by an employer/training agency/education authority
- 2.5 The College has the right to report any criminal offence it believes to be criminal to the police

3 REFERENCES

None

4 DEFINITIONS

- 4.1 **General definition** - The essence of misconduct under this procedure is:

- 4.1.1 Improper interference with the functioning or activities of the College, or of those who work or study in the College; or

- 4.1.2 Action which otherwise improperly damages the College or its reputation

- 4.2 Particular definition - Actions which shall constitute misconduct, whether occurring on College premises or elsewhere:

This list is not intended to be exhaustive and other specific examples of misconduct may apply.

- 4.2.1 Any conduct which constitutes a criminal offence

- 4.2.2 Substance abuse including illegal or controlled drugs and alcohol

- 4.2.3 Disruption of, or improper interference with, the academic, administrative, sporting, social or other activities of the College

- 4.2.4 The possession and/or consumption of alcohol, drugs or illegal substances on the College premises (unless being used strictly in accordance with a valid prescription)

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- 4.2.5 Obstruction of, or improper interference with, the functions, duties or activities of any student or member of staff of the College, or any visitor to the College
- 4.2.6 Violent, indecent, disorderly, threatening, intimidating or offensive behaviour or language
- 4.2.7 Sexual or racial harassment or any bullying of any kind of any student, member of College staff, or visitor to the College
- 4.2.8 Fraud, deceit, deception or dishonesty in relation to the College or its staff, students or visitors
- 4.2.9 Cheating or plagiarism in academic course work or in examinations
- 4.2.10 Theft, misappropriation or misuse of College property, or the property of the College's staff, students or visitors, including computer misuse
- 4.2.11 Misuse or unauthorised use of College premises, property or services
- 4.2.12 Damage to College property, or the property of the College's staff, students or visitors, caused intentionally or recklessly
- 4.2.13 Action likely to cause injury or impair safety on College premises
- 4.2.14 Failure to respect the rights of others to freedom of belief and freedom of speech
- 4.2.15 Discrimination against any student, member of College staff or any visitor to the College on, inter alia, grounds of disability, ethnicity, gender, age, culture, sexual orientation or religion
- 4.2.16 Breach of the provisions of any College code, rule or regulation
- 4.2.17 Failure to disclose personal details to a member of staff of the College in circumstances in which it is reasonable to require that such information is given
- 4.2.18 Failure to comply with a reasonable instruction relating to discipline, issued by the Assistant Principal, Curriculum or by a member of staff acting with the authority of the Assistant Principal, Curriculum
- 4.3 Serious offences**
- 4.3.1 A guideline to what constitutes a serious offence is that the offence is likely to attract a custodial sentence if proved in a criminal court; or that it is triable as a criminal offence. Any violent act causing physical damage to other persons, or any threat to their well-being will be regarded as a serious offence, irrespective of the level of damage or harm inflicted. Possession, consumption and abuse of illegal substances will be reported to the Police
- 4.4 Offences other than serious offences**
- 4.4.1 If the alleged misconduct is not regarded as constituting a serious offence, it may be dealt with internally. If the offence is reported to the police, action may be deferred until the police and courts have dealt with the matter
- 5 PROCEDURE**
- 5.1 Unless the context indicates otherwise, actions within this procedure shall normally be delegated to the relevant member of staff as indicated in the following stages of the Discipline Procedure. This delegated responsibility does not include expulsion

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- 5.2 An allegation of misconduct may be dismissed immediately if there is no case for the student to answer, or that it is for some other reason appropriate to do so
- 5.3 The procedure involves a number of stages. However, depending on the circumstances and nature of the alleged offence, some stages may be omitted. In the case of serious misconduct, students are likely to face suspension pending a Stage 4 Disciplinary Hearing to ensure all relevant information can be correlated.
- 5.4 The initial stages of the procedure are intended to deal mainly with course related matters such as student lateness, unsatisfactory attendance, academic under-performance, or minor behaviour problems where these have not been resolved through the tutor referral system or guidance. The tutor referral system or guidance will normally support students through any difficulty they are experiencing. However, some students may not comply with the agreed actions resulting from tutorial reviews; e.g. repeated unexplained absence not related to academic or personal circumstances. In these cases it may be appropriate to move directly to Stage 2 interview
- 5.5 At any stage of this procedure, the student may be accompanied by a friend or representative. (but such representation will not include a legal advisor or official appointed by advocacy agencies such as Citizen's Advice Bureau). Care should be taken when involving Parents especially where students may be estranged from the family. Tutors should seek advice from Head of Faculties/Programme Managers if in doubt. Schools should always be immediately contacted and informed of any disciplinary issues at any stage of the procedure
- 5.6 Up to stage 3 interview, students may appeal to the Assistant Principal (Curriculum) / SMT Member against the disciplinary action taken. Appeals against Stage 4 Disciplinary Hearing decisions shall be made to an Appeals Committee, chaired by the Assistant Principal (Curriculum) / SMT Member
- 5.7 In the case of continuing unexplained absence of the student during the procedures, any stage may be carried out by correspondence (recorded delivery as appropriate)
- 5.8 A student suspected of a disciplinary offence shall be approached by any member of staff if safe to do so and asked for his or her ID Card. The Card shall be retained and passed to the Programme Manager in whose programme area the individual is a student. If an ID Card is not immediately available then the name of the student shall be obtained and passed onto Programme Manager who normally shall have first line responsibility for dealing with the student. If the Programme Manager is not available then the matter shall be passed to a Head of Faculty or any member of the Senior Management Team
- 5.9 Failure by the student to identify her/himself as required shall be treated as a disciplinary offence under this code
- 6 ABSENCE PROCEDURE**
- 6.1 This stage is only relevant to address unacceptable absence.
- 6.2 If any student's attendance falls below satisfactory levels, and no contact has been made with relevant college staff, Appendix 1 letter should issued on request by the relevant Curriculum Leader/Programme Manager
- 6.3.1 Should the student's attendance still not improve to an agreed and acceptable standard, or not attend the interview as requested through the above letter, they will move to the first stage of the full discipline procedure.

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6. Stage 1 Interview

- 6.1.1 The student will be invited to the Stage 1 interview using the letter in Appendix 2a or 2b, receiving a statement of the nature of the problem and confirmation that the interview is part of the procedure. This letter must clearly state the relevant stage of the Disciplinary Process. If the student is under 16 or classed as a Vulnerable Adult, the legal parent or guardian should also be copied in on all correspondence and invited to attend the interview.

In the case of an unauthorised absence of a school pupil, the Personal Tutor (Class Lecturer) should meet with the pupil on their return, record the interview and a copy of the SDREC passed to the Schools' administrator for onward transmission to the school and a copy to their parent or guardian.

- 6.1.2 The Personal Tutor explains the nature of the problem/offence, and that this interview is the first stage of a formal procedure and there is a possibility of further stages should there not be a satisfactory outcome
- 6.1.3 The Personal Tutor discusses possible reasons for the problem/offence and ways in which the student can correct matters, with support as appropriate, within an agreed period
- 6.1.4 The Personal Tutor records the outcome of the interview on the standard form (SDREC) for the student and the student's file
- 6.1.5 The Personal Tutor should ensure the student verifies the record of the interview
- 6.1.6 If matters do not improve within the agreed period or a more serious misdemeanour occurs, proceed to

6.2 Stage 2 Interview

- 6.2.1 The student will be invited to the Stage 2 interview by the Curriculum Leader using the letter in Appendix 2a or 2b receiving a written statement of the nature of the problem and confirmation that the interview is part of the procedure. This letter must clearly state the relevant stage of the Disciplinary Process. If the student is under 16 or classed as a Vulnerable Adult, the legal parent or guardian should also be copied in on all correspondence and invited to attend the interview. This process should also be followed for any issues with school pupils. In this instance, the school must also receive a copy of all correspondence.
- 6.2.2 The Curriculum Leader explains that this is the second stage of a formal procedure
- 6.2.3 The Curriculum Leader discuss with the student reasons for the problem, together with ways in which the student can correct matters, with support as appropriate, within an agreed period
- 6.2.4 The interview is recorded (SDPREC) for the student, the student's monitoring file and (if under 16) the record may be sent to their Parent/Guardian or, if appropriate, their employer (SDPNOTE)
- 6.2.5 The Curriculum Leader should ensure the student has a copy of the record of interview
- 6.2.6 If matters do not improve within the agreed period or a more serious misdemeanour occurs, proceed

6.3 Stage 3 Interview

- 6.3.1 This interview will involve the student, the Programme Manager and can include the relevant Curriculum Leader. If the student is under 16 or classed as a Vulnerable Adult, the legal parent or guardian should also be copied in on all correspondence and invited to attend the interview. A school/employer representative may also be invited to attend, as appropriate.

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- 6.3.2 The invitation to the interview will be in writing using the letter in Appendix 2a or 2b and will describe the problem/offence. This letter must clearly state the relevant stage of the Disciplinary Process.
- 6.3.3 At the interview the Programme Manager will indicate that depending upon the outcome of the stage, the student may proceed to the final stage of the discipline procedure.
- 6.3.4 After discussion, a strategy may be agreed whereby the student agrees to correct matters, with support as appropriate, within an agreed period.
- 6.3.5 A written record of the interview will be produced and verified by the student (SDPREC). The record will state the outcome of the interview and will confirm that further unsatisfactory conduct and/or academic performance shall lead to the final stage of the discipline procedure - the outcome of which may involve dismissal from the College.

6.4 Stage 4 Disciplinary Hearing

- 6.4.1 If the student's conduct and/or academic performance continues to give cause for concern the matter will be referred, together with the student's monitoring file, to the Head of Faculty/Senior Manager.
- 6.4.2 The student shall be given not less than ten days notice in writing (SDP 4a) of the date, time and place of the Disciplinary hearing, and be informed of the nature of the complaint and informed that they have the right to be accompanied at the disciplinary hearing by a friend or other person of their choice (but such representation will not include a legal advisor or official appointed by advocacy agencies such as Citizen's Advice Bureau). The student shall be provided with copies of any relevant documentary evidence in advance of the hearing. The student may waive their right to a minimum of 10 days notice, but this should be recorded in the record of meeting paperwork.
- 6.4.3 The decision will be notified/confirmed to the student in writing (SDP 4b) to the last address recorded by the college and, if appropriate, to their employer. A copy of this letter must be forwarded to Student Records.
- 6.4.4 Students will also be advised in writing of the appeal process and their right to appeal.
- 6.4.5 Any student exclusion will be reported to the Assistant Principal, Curriculum.
- 6.4.6 Any student expulsion recommendation will be reported by the Assistant Principal, Curriculum, to the Principal.
- 6.4.7 The Principal will decide expulsion recommendations and report to the Board.
- 6.4.8 Any documents connected with a disciplinary or appeal hearing shall be treated as confidential.

6.5 Summary Procedure

- 6.5.1 If the college considers it appropriate to do so, and if the student agrees, the matter may be dealt with summarily, without recourse to a formal disciplinary hearing. If the matter is dealt with summarily, written or oral evidence will be considered as the college thinks fit. The student will be found guilty of misconduct only if, on the evidence shows beyond reasonable doubt, the student's guilt. If a finding of guilt is made, any of the penalties set out in these regulations may be imposed, other than expulsion from the College.

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6.5.2 In the event of a finding of guilt, the manager responsible will write a short report setting out the misconduct alleged, the grounds for the finding of guilt and the penalty imposed. A copy of the report will be sent to the student and, if appropriate, their employer and/or parent and guardian. Where the misconduct relates to examinations or other assessed work the report may contain recommendations under 6.7.4 of this procedure and a copy of the report will also be sent to the appropriate Programme Assessment Board

6.6 Suspension pending an investigation or hearing

6.6.1 A student who is the subject of a complaint of misconduct, or against whom a criminal charge is pending, or who is the subject of police investigation, may be suspended from the College by a member of the SMT or a Head of Faculty, pending a disciplinary investigation or action. In appropriate cases, the student's employer and/or parent or guardian will be notified of such action

6.6.2 A student who is suspended is prohibited from entering College premises and from participating in College activities. Suspension may be subject to qualification, such as permission to take an examination. The terms of the suspension will be notified in writing to the student. An order of suspension may include a requirement that the student shall have no contact with a named person or persons

6.6.3 Suspension will not normally result in withholding any Bursary payment due

6.7 Review

6.7.1 A decision to suspend a student for the reasons stated in 6.15.1 shall be subject to review at the request of the student after four weeks. Such a review will not involve a hearing, but the student, either personally or through his or her adviser, friend or representative, will be entitled to make written representations. The review will be conducted by the Assistant Principal, Curriculum or his/her nominee but this will not be the member of SMT / Head of Faculty who authorised the original suspension

6.7 Penalties

6.7.1 If a student is found guilty of an allegation of misconduct, penalties may be imposed. The penalties are set out below. A student may not be expelled following an allegation heard under the summary procedure

6.7.2 When determining penalties, consideration will be given to the seriousness of the misconduct, the circumstances of the misconduct, and the means and general personal circumstances of the student.

6.7.3 Where a finding of misconduct has been made under this procedure, and a student has also been sentenced by a criminal court on the same facts, the penalty imposed by the criminal court will be taken into account in deciding the penalty

6.7.4 A student found guilty of misconduct may be:

6.7.4.1 Absolutely discharged, which means that although the student may be technically guilty of the misconduct alleged, no blame should be attached to his or her actions

6.7.4.2 Admonished

6.7.4.3 Cautioned, which means that no penalty is imposed, but if the student is found guilty of misconduct on a subsequent occasion in the following twelve months, or some other specified period, he or she will then be dealt with for both offences

6.7.4.4 Conditionally discharged, which means that no penalty is imposed, subject to the student fulfilling certain stipulated conditions including future good behaviour over the

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following twelve months or some other specified period. If the conditions are not met, a penalty may be imposed following a further hearing

6.7.4.5 Required to pay a reasonable sum by way of compensation for identified and quantified loss

6.7.4.6 Excluded from the College for a fixed period of time, up to a maximum of twelve months. A student who is excluded from the College will usually have no rights to enter College premises or to approach College staff but, in certain cases, he/she may be permitted to enter College premises and to take part in College activities. The terms of the exclusion will be notified in writing to the student. An order of exclusion may include a requirement that the student shall have no contact with a named person or persons. Exclusion may affect payment of any Bursary payment due

6.7.4.7 Expelled from the College, which means that the student ceases to be a member of the College, and loses all rights and privileges of membership (The decision for expulsion remains with the Principal)

Where misconduct relates to examinations or other assessed work, a recommendation may be made to the appropriate Programme Assessment Board that it should:

6.7.5.1 Award the student a lower assessment than those which he or she would otherwise have been awarded, or award no marks, for the examination or assessed work in which the student committed the offence

6.7.5.2 Award the student a lower assessment than those which he or she would otherwise have been awarded, or award no marks, for the unit of which the examination or assessed work was part

6.7.5.3 Exclude the student from the award of an academic award. This may be either permanent or for a stated period, and may be absolute or subject to compliance with stipulated requirements

6.8 Mental illness

6.8.1 If it appears to those considering an allegation of misconduct that the student in question is suffering from mental illness or mental instability, the proceedings may be adjourned for the preparation of a medical report

6.8.2 If there is medical evidence that the student is suffering from mental illness or mental instability, those dealing with the case may suspend or terminate the proceedings, if it is felt appropriate to do so. It may be made a condition of suspension or termination of the proceedings that the student seek medical treatment

6.9 Appeals

6.9.1 A student has a right to appeal against a finding of guilt and /or against an imposition of penalty. The appeal, including the grounds on which the appeal is based, must be made to the Assistant Principal, Curriculum or another Assistant Principal if the Assistant Principal Curriculum is not available within 10 days of the conclusion of the proceedings. The Assistant Principal Curriculum will not chair the appeal if involved in other stages of the Disciplinary Procedure. The hearing will be chaired by another Assistant Principal

6.9.2 There will be no entitlement to a rehearing of the case. Those hearing the appeal may overturn the finding of guilt where they consider it just to do so or impose a lesser or greater penalty, having considered whether the original penalty imposed was fair and reasonable in the light of all the circumstances of the case, and the student's means and general personal circumstances. In particular, a finding may be overturned in the light of new evidence; or

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where it is considered that the original hearing was not conducted fairly; or where the finding of guilt was unreasonable in the light of the findings of fact. The student may present the appeal in person or in writing as he or she chooses, and may be represented by an adviser, friend or other representative (but such representation will not include a legal advisor or official appointed by advocacy agencies such as Citizen's Advice Bureau)

6.9.3 Appeals will be heard by the Appeals Committee of the college (see Appendix 3)

6.9.4 The decision of the Student Appeals Committee will normally be final. However leave to Appeal to the Appeals Committee of the Board of management may be granted but this will only be considered where the appeal is on the grounds that the college management has not complied with or incorrectly applied the Student Disciplinary policies and procedures

6.10 Notification to Parent/Carer/Supporting Organisation

6.10.1 Where a student is under 16 years of age then the student's parent, carer or supporting organisation, including school must be informed of any disciplinary hearing or action being taken against the student irrespective of which stage the discipline problem has reached and this shall be by copy of a letter or Notification Form used by the College in the Disciplinary Procedure

6.10.2 Similarly, where the student is regarded as a vulnerable adult (usually but not necessarily with learning difficulties or special needs) then the student's parent, carer or supporting organisation or school must be informed of any disciplinary hearing or action being taken against the student irrespective of which stage the discipline problem has reached and this shall be by copy of a letter or Notification Form used by the College in the Disciplinary Procedure

Note for guidance

For students aged 16 and over, we would not normally inform anyone else except the student unless the student is a 'vulnerable adult' (see 6.20.2). The only exceptions to this are:

- where a student aged 16 and over has agreed that parents/carers should be informed
- where a student's fees are being funded by a sponsoring organisation e.g. employer. In this case, the employer should be advised that the student has been subject to disciplinary action when this involves poor attendance, or an event, which may or has led to suspension or exclusion from the course. The precise details should not be given but the company informed that their continuation on the course is in jeopardy or has ceased as a result of a disciplinary issue.

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Appendix H: Demographic data on case study students and lecturers

Students

| Pseudonym | Subject | Age | Gender | Nationality | Years in college | No of interviews | Interview dates | Length of interview | Lectured by |
|-----------|--------------|-----|--------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Bijon | Accounting | 28 | Male | Iranian | 3 | 2 | Oct 2007 Jan 2009 | 0:07:38 0:12:11 | Neil, Pauline, Tom Wallace |
| Katarzyna | Accounting | 52 | Female | Polish | 1 | 2 | Oct 2008 May 2009 | 0:10:52 0:18:36 | Neil, Pauline, Tom Wallace |
| Amy | Child Care | 18 | Female | Hong Kong Chinese | 2 | 3 | Apr 2009 Apr 2010 May 2010 | 0:08:27 0:08:29 0:07:51 | Rhona |
| Dita | Child Care | 52 | Female | Polish | 1 | 2 | Oct 2008 Jan 2009 | 0:11:29 0:10:22 | Susan |
| Gagan | Art & Design | 45+ | Male | Nepalese | 2 | 2 | Jan 2009 May 2009 | 0:14:29 0:13:53 | Victor |

Staff

| Pseudonym | Role | Age | Gender | Nationality | Years in role | No of interviews | Interview dates | Length of interview | Personal Tutor | Lecturer to |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|-----|--------|-------------|-----------------------------|------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Neil | Accounting Lecturer | 45+ | Male | Scottish | 25 | 1 | May 2009 | 1:04:16 | | Bijon Katarzyna |
| Pauline | Business Lecturer | 45+ | Female | Scottish | 14 | 2 | May 2009 Sep 2011 | 0:32:33 0:23:22 | Yes | Bijon Katarzyna |
| Rhona | Care Lecturer | 45+ | Female | Scottish | 2 + 20 as a Primary Teacher | 1 | Apr 2009 | 0:34:23 | | Amy |
| Susan | Care Lecturer | 45+ | Female | Scottish | 15 | 1 | May 2009 | 0:36:23 | | Dita |
| Tom | Accounts Lecturer | 45+ | Male | Scottish | 0.15 | 1 | May 2009 | 0:46:06 | | Bijon Katarzyna |
| Victor | Art Lecturer | 45+ | Male | English | 10 | 1 | Apr 2009 | 0:32:51 | Yes | Gagan |
| Wallace | Law Lecturer | 45+ | Male | Scottish | 26 | 1 | Jun 2009 | 0:49:31 | Yes | Bijon Katarzyna |
| Yen | International Development Officer | 28 | Female | Chinese | 1 | 1 | Sep 2011 | 0:53:29 | | |

Appendix I: Sample of Interview Transcriptions

a) Lecturer Pauline: 1st Interview: May 2009

Duration: 0:32:33

START AUDIO

Interviewer: So, could I just first just ask you what you do, in te- terms, of, erm, I should have actually said any names and things like that will be taken out as well, and anything that identifies people, I'm going to take out as well. So, feel free to use people's names because in the transcripts, it'll just all be taken out.

So, erm, if you could just tell me sort of kind of what your relationship is to Bijon, and erm, Katarzyna.

Pauline: Right, Bijon and Katarzyna, for both of them, I'm their personal tutor at the moment. However, I don't actually teach them in class, at the moment.

Erm, Bijon was a student who I did teach last year, he was at college last year, and I taught him in college last year.

Erm, I know that you haven't specifically asked me about, but probably another student that I have currently been

teaching over at in Paisley or University of West of Scotland, she came to me as a student about three years ago, straight from the Czech Republic, and she probably fits into your criteria as well, and I've still got, as I say, that kind of on-going relationship, but she came to this college initially and eventually then progressed to the university. So, she probably fits directly into that criteria.

Interviewer:

That sounds good as well, yes. Erm, so how are the students, in general, doing on their course?

Pauline:

Erm, I think that they're doing fine. I think that, you know, obviously, the language is an issue. What I've found over the years is that the student themselves is probably more important than the language, you know what I mean?

If they come here with, erm, a good education already and they have, good problem solving, good organisational skills, and they're quite proactive, then they'll cope a lot better than if they don't have those skills as well.

So, I think that, to some extent, you know, you know, when I think of the different students, who they are as a person makes probably more of a difference than the language that they come with. How they, how they respond to that within themselves makes a difference.

Interviewer: Right, that's fantas- interesting. Have you noticed any - so you said problems with language, what kind of problems would they have with the language?

Pauline: Erm, well, initially, just not understanding. Making relationships with other students can be difficult, not because other students are prejudiced but other students find communicating with them difficult. Erm, you know, you see them maybe sitting in a group, and they'll look a little bit confused. They don't pick up on the chat that's going on between students, partly also because of the, erm, the local dialect, if you like, you know, just the different ways that people speak, and they might have some English before they come here but that's different from being able to pick up everybody in Dumfries.

Interviewer: Mmh, yes.

Pauline: So, that's quite, it takes them a while to get their ear into that. In class, they do ask questions when, erm, when they really, really feel the need to, but I think that they don't ask all the questions that they, they probably could. They try to piece it together.

It's like, I mean, the way that I think they do it, it's like being young, erm, maybe being at primary school when

you're learning to read, and you're picking up different parts, and there's gaps, and you work out in your own head what those gaps are, and sometimes they get it right and sometimes they don't get it right.

Interviewer: Have you had any problems with culture?

Pauline: Yes, I would say that that makes a big difference, not problems, but I think that the culture that the student comes from makes a huge impact into how they deal with being at college, how they deal with other people, how they deal with our education system. Our education system, erm, is very different from some other countries, and I think it takes them a while to get used to that.

Interviewer: Have you any kind of examples of that?

Pauline: Erm, well, Mirka, the student that I had years ago, I would say that she came from the Czech Republic and their schools were very, erm, autocratic. The teacher's at the front and quite unapproachable, and children had to sit and had to listen. So, it was very much teacher led, and I would say that when she came at first, I could see that she found it difficult.

I was teaching her, erm, she came on the retail travel higher and they really have to be proactive, and it's mostly research based and they get to choose at different places, the research. So, the student, it's very student led and, that was quite difficult for her, you know, and again, I think it took her quite a long time, I would say a good six months, just to get erm, brave enough almost to ask questions, and when I asked her if she was okay not to just say, yes.

Big tendency just to, I can't tell the teacher that I'm struggling because then I'm failing. She doesn't see the teacher as a source of help, the teacher is a punisher. Erm, so then they can't confide in the teacher if they're struggling with something, and she actually was a very bright girl.

She, again, was very independent because she'd come from that background, and I think, it was up to the students to bring themselves up to level that the class required. So, for example, she always brought a dictionary and used her dictionary very, very well.

Whereas, Bijon comes from a completely different culture, and without, erm, sounding really, really racist (Laughter), you can take this out of your research if you want, but I think in his culture, basically, if you've got the money, then you can get the qualification, and I think that sometimes, you know, he looks for a shortcut, and he *does* look for a lot from his tutors, and it's any way to get that. It's having the certificate that matters rather than the having the education that matters.

Erm, and I think that that, that means that sometimes the student's energy is going somewhere, it's into making excuses about why things haven't got done or cutting corners, or perhaps, erm, finding a way, you know, I mean I wouldn't say cheating exactly, but, you know what I mean, finding a shortcut into getting something achieved.

Interviewer:

Yes, alright, that's very interesting. How does their written work compare with native students' work?

Pauline:

Oh! Well, again, a big difference. I would say that some, our students' work isn't that good, their communication, their written communication, generally, I would say, in the college isn't very good.

Erm, and some students from abroad their work will be quite weak, but again, depending on their background, and I know I kind of keep harping back on that, but if you've got somebody's who's been intelligent and who's coped well in their own language and they've got good skills in their own language, they'll come, and okay, initially, their work will be quite kind of pidgin English. It won't be that good, but when they get up to speed and it's quite quickly, then their English is better, their written English is better.

In saying that, sometimes the way that the language works, you know, maybe an adjective coming after a noun or a certain way of saying something, so, if you know the student when you're reading their written work, you hear their voice and sometimes they put things round a slightly different way.

But, again, I would say, it very much depends on the student and their own level of intelligence and probably their own ability in their own language, and if they're able in their own language to quite quickly get up to speed, then they probably do better than some of our students because, I suppose, when they come here, it's kind of sink or swim at the moment. They either cope, and if they cope, they do very well because they've got all kinds of strategies in order to cope, but if they don't cope, then they probably would end up leaving.

Interviewer:

Mmh, yes.

Pauline:

But it's getting, getting a lot better, I would say. The social, I mean, again, you know, linked to culture, the social, erm, integration makes a big difference as well, and I know now, I mean, when I had Mirka, you know, a few years ago, there was virtually nothing for foreign students and nothing organised, and there wasn't really a recognition of it.

Whereas, now, the students', erm, association is a bit more up and running. Students themselves know each

other. So, for example, there's a girl on one of the sports courses, from Poland, and she knows Mirka. So, the students, I don't know the mechanism, I don't know where they find out about other foreign students, but there is, erm, there is a common, an association or something that they do all go to.

Interviewer:

We have introduced Katarzyna to Dita, who's on a care course, because Dita was lonely because she's what, 51, and, erm, you know, it was, was with, erm, you know 17 year olds, and she just wanted an adult conversation, as it were. So, can I ask just how important is spelling and grammar on the course?

Pauline:

Erm, I would say most courses then, the spelling and grammar isn't terribly, terribly important, you know. The spelling, you know, you probably would never penalise them for spelling except if it *is* a, a particular requirement.

So, for example, when I was teaching Mirka, the spelling had to be right in place names, but she found that quite easy because the spelling would be there and be research based. I mean, there's a lot of our own students that would consistently spell things incorrectly.

Interviewer:

So, it's, it's more content...

Pauline: It's subject specific. The grammar, erm, as long as, again, it depends on the level that the student's working at. I mean, Katarzyna and Bijon are now doing HNC, which is, you know, I mean, one of the kind of higher level courses, but where it becomes more important is the fact that they just don't explain what they mean, or they state something and they say something as an example.

Erm, so, for example, not that Bijon or, erm, Katarzyna would need to do this but, you know, like, let's say you're asking them to describe what, erm, a temporary contract is in business.

Erm, what they will do is give you an example of a temporary contract, they'll say, erm, a temporary contract is when someone works, erm, over the Christmas period, and you say, well, okay, yes, that's an example but, you know, if you said a temporary contract is, for example, when somebody works over the Christmas per..., but it's not always when somebody works over the Christmas period. So, some of those kind of minor things, and I would say they'll pick up questions incorrectly. I would say it was more their understanding of written work rather than the written work that they put down.

Interviewer: They put down, right. Can I ask, you've talked about, you know, students getting on with, with people in their class, are they part of, part of a group in terms of...?

Pauline: I think it totally varies on the student, and it depends on the group they're in.

Interviewer: Yes, have you noticed anything about their physical position?

Pauline: Physical position?

Interviewer: You know, their position when they're in the classroom?

Pauline: [...10 secs] No, to be honest, no.

Interviewer: No. Right, does teaching, erm, any of these students give you any particular difficulties that you don't have with, erm, with native students?

Pauline: Erm, I think, I think just to catch their attention a wee bit more, do you know what I mean, and sometimes, you know, you, you will have to sort of stop and say 'Are you okay with that?' or, you know, maybe you're aware that there's a wee bit of confusion on their face, you know,

giving out a task, you just need more of a point in seeing how they're getting on, but then, if you do that too much, you're kind of making them different, do you know what I mean? So, kind of, at some point, it has to be student led but that's where, I think you make more of an effort to be aware when you're talking to them or body language and eye contact and just speaking really clearly to them and looking at them rather than, you know, when you're writing something.

Interviewer: Erm, is there any sort of positive things you feel that they bring into the classroom that perhaps, you know, ...?

Pauline: I think, erm, there's lots of positive things as individuals. When I'm looking just at, you know, foreign students, I think, I mean, certainly, when we were, when I had Mirka doing travel and tourism, I mean, having someone from another country there is brilliant because, you know, they just give a completely different view.

Erm, I think again with Bijon, I think, Bijon is in a kind of position where he, erm, he was going out with, I don't know whether you know [mentions girlfriend's name], Bijon goes with or lives with a girl here, and they lived with each other before they ever came on the course. So, the two of them came on the same course last year, so they sat together on the course. So, that kind of gave a different view, if you like, because Bijon wasn't really bothered with the rest, and he didn't want to be on that

course. He wanted to be on the course that he was on, but we were saying 'Well, look, you haven't got the qualifications, and we don't think you'll cope with it.', and he is kind of struggling this year, but again, he's been advised last year and this year consistently to make use of facilities, to make use of help that the college has, and he won't do it.

But, then again, erm, another pressure, I suppose, on foreign students, if they're earning money to be here, so they can't be here without earning money, erm, but the money gets in the way of being here. So, some of their academic problems are caused by the fact that their attendance is poor, and their attendance is poor because they're either tired or they're working.

Interviewer:

Do you think Katarzyna and Bijon will pass?

Pauline:

I don't know, I don't know. Their lecturers are saying at the moment, Katarzyna seems to be, erm, on track to pass.

Bijon, I've heard a couple of the lecturers saying to me they're not sure, but, again, that's partly Bijon's own personality, you know. If, I could sit with Bijon across the table from me, and you could tell him in as clear a voice as you can, 'You're not going to pass this course.' and he just, he just blanks it, he just doesn't take that on board, you know, and as I say, it's a case of 'Well, if I say I'll

pass it, I'll find a way to pass it.' and the way to pass it won't necessarily be sitting down and getting on with the work.

Interviewer: Right, okay. Erm, now, you've talked about lots of things that you've made to, to, you know, how you interact with people in the classroom, is there anything else that you've, any changes you've made to accommodate second language learners?

Pauline: Erm,(8 sec gap) it sounds awful when I say so, but honestly, I don't think so.

Interviewer: Fine. No, that's fine, erm, because of your experience with these students, have you made any changes about the way you would approach information sessions?

Pauline: I don't do information sessions. It's only the, erm, CLs that do information sessions. Yes.

Interviewer: Fine, so, erm, the other thing is, erm, if, for example, a, a student came to you and said, you know, I've never been educated in English before, but I'm thinking of coming to

the college, is there any advice you would give them on how to prepare themselves?

Pauline:

Erm, if they could come and so eloquently say, do you know what I mean? (Laughter)

I would probably find out, I would ask them, I would ask them, erm, obviously, about what kind of level of English that they have, and I would show them maybe some materials.

If it was down to me, when we, when we used to do the information sessions ourself, one of the things that we used to do was give them a wee task to do. So, you would talk to everyone on an individual basis, and while you were talking to people on an individual basis, you would give them a wee case study and then a bit to write and then a bit to write about themselves, and even from seeing what the students put together, a few paragraphs, that really told you the level that they were working at. You know, I mean, you don't need to see a lot of work from a student to get the gist of the level they're at.

But, yeah, certainly, I mean, I would say try and get yourself up to a reasonable standard before you come on the course, take advantage, and, you know, I have in the past, you know, asked students to come and do things, and I'm sure you've probably had names either numeracy or communication of people who've agreed to come in over the summer, whether, whether it's students from

here or students from other places and to get them self up to a standard, and they very often don't do it.

I know that there's work pressures, and there's all kinds of pressures but that is the one thing, I think, erm, we, as a college, I think, yes, okay, we do need to put a lot of measures in place, but maybe also, we need to put clear expectations on the students as well and really get them to realise that saying 'Well, English isn't my first language.' is an excuse, you know, I mean, isn't good enough. They need to take advantage, they need to realise, okay, if you are going to be learning in English, you have a responsibility to improve your English to the level that the course requires because, at the end of the day, our courses are very practical courses and that's what employers need.

Interviewer:

Yeah, this raises the question, whose responsibility is it, do you think, to make adjustments?

Pauline:

I think it's, erm, everybody's responsibility. I think it's our responsibility to do what we can, but I think that the student, it's the same with any course, whatever a student is learning, the ultimate responsibility really has to be with student.

But we also have the responsibility to provide the right courses to help them along as much as possible. I mean, the blog, I mean, that is one thing now with the blogs, we

have the language, so they could transfer that to their own language, and I've used that with students, you know, in the past. I mean, again, another student that, I don't know whether you know when I think about it, and he doesn't, the reason he hasn't eh come to mind is because he coped so well with Martin (Surname). Do you know Martin?

Interviewer: Yeah, I know Martin, yeah.

Pauline: You know, Martin was educated in Bulgaria until he was 15, you know, and he coped so well, fully integrated with other students, erm, and that's what I'm saying, it didn't even occur to me until just there. Erm, but, yeah, I mean, an odd time, and I have said to Martin, look, you know, if he says, you know, 'Oh, well, you know what I mean, you know, English isn't my first language.', well, okay, 'What are *you* doing about it, Martin?', do you know what I mean, but he has coped really, really well.

Interviewer: Erm, is there any support that you think that, that the students need that they haven't been offered or...you know?

Pauline: I, I think that the support probably has to come at the start, and also, I would say that the support almost has to

be, erm, mandatory for them. I think that it would be doing the students a big favour.

They might not like it at the time, but I think that, you know, they, they should be, erm, compelled as part of their course, maybe instead of having some directed study, to actually work and maybe get students from, you know, other different backgrounds in the college together, and okay, not make it compulsory for the whole year, but at least make it compulsory for a while because I think that if they have, erm, if they get into the habit of coming, erm, down to the ILC or doing something else, let's say for six weeks before the October holiday, I think if that was made compulsory, then they're much more likely to see this as a place where they could get support across the year instead of failing an essay.

Then, you know, the lecturer saying, because, again as a lecturer, it's very frustrating, and really a bit annoying at times, when support is there. One of the, you know, I mean, Dumfries students or foreign students, if there's support there, they have the option to take that support. Erm, and all the lecturers and all the staff here, we, we all do far more than our job ever asks us to do, really, but if the student does a piece of work that isn't, erm, good enough or if they're handing it in late with the excuse, well, I couldn't do it and haven't gone and got the help that's available to them, then, I think that, you know, that is down to them.

Interviewer:

Yeah, I agree with you. Erm, talking about you now, erm, so you've, you've actually got quite a few second

language students? You've got, erm, I was going to say, how many have you got, you've got...?

Pauline: I've got Martin in a higher class, erm, I don't think, there's nobody in the SCBU class. Martin in the higher class who speaks Bulgarian, there's Bijon, there's Katarzyna, erm, and as I say, Mirka, who I have taught over at the university.

Interviewer: So, so, you've answered the question, the next question, as well, so, you've had experience before this year as well.

Is there any sort of good practice that you would like to share with, with other members of staff that you think, well, you know, I've done something and that's actually worked really well. You know, it would be good to tell other people about it?

Pauline: The best thing that I've ever done, I think, erm, which is out with the classroom, is when Mirka came here. As I say, she was the first foreign student I ever had, and as I got to know her, I realised, well, you know, after she was away from home, she was homesick, and at that point, the student didn't really, the college didn't really have computers, and we didn't have access to things like Skype, and I arranged for her to be able to go to the Point and access a computer with a camera and talk to her

family at home using Skype because that gave her a lot of support.

Interviewer: Yeah, that's certainly a good one, yeah. Erm, anything that you've tried that you felt, no, that didn't work out and....?

Pauline: Erm, I would say trying, trying to get students to, to do something that they don't naturally want to do, like using a dictionary. It's like barking at the moon, you know, Bijon, I've been saying to Bijon for two years, you know what I mean, use a dictionary, use a dictionary, use a dictionary, and he just will not do it.

Interviewer: Is there anything that you feel that you would like to do with these students but haven't had an opportunity to do?

Pauline: I suppose just get to know them initially at first when they come on the course, erm, maybe be told a little bit because what happens is someone just appears. You don't get any advance notice of anything, someone just appears.

So, if you had a wee bit of a note of the background because, realistically speaking, if you've got 15 to 20

students in your class and you might pick up that someone's first language is a foreign language, but it's, you can't break off from the other 19 and start quizzing them, and then, they're out of your class, and they're going from class to class. So, you know, you might just have a class for an hour a week, and you don't know them.

I mean, at least when I had Mirka, I mean, that was a class I had a lot of contact with. So, I got to know her and she got to, I suppose, used to me and used to the way that I spoke and used to the other people in her class. Whereas, if she was in a class that was going more from different lecturer to different lecturer, her experience could have been very different.

Interviewer:

Yeah, erm, so, do you think that actually something like having more time to have, you know, like university style tutorials would, would...?

Pauline:

I think, I think having information initially, but again, that would help us with all sorts of students with different issues, if we just had more information about the students, and that used to happen when the lecturers were more involved in information sessions, erm, also, maybe more choice of materials. I think too the thing as well of saying, I mean, I was talking about Skype, the other thing was, really, being able to put work on a blog and then they've got the, the different buttons so they can actually transfer that. How, how it comes up because I've spoken to language teachers in the past and they say,

these things actually they're not very good because they give a direct translation, which could just turn out a lot of mince, you know, but maybe it's a starting point. Sorry, what was your question?

Interviewer:

It's, it's just anything that, you know, you would like to do, erm, someone actually suggested that, you know, they would have quite liked to, you know, take struggling students, of any nationality, erm, you know, to have that time to, to do tutorials with them, but of course, they don't have that time with them. Do you think that that idea is useful?

Pauline:

Yeah, yeah, I do. I think that, erm, as you say, I mean, it's just all about timing. We do all tend to do that but it depend how much contact you have. Realistically, what happens in practice is if you're the major lecturer on the course, it depends partly on how the course is set up. So, if it's a course that's set up, you know, where you maybe see them for, say, six hours a week, then you'll have quite a lot to do with that group. You'll get to know them as a group, you'll get to know all the interactions, you'll get to know people's strengths and weaknesses, and you *can* spend time maybe with certain students.

Another thing that I try and encourage the students to do is buddy up with each other. Erm, so, again, a, a student who comes from another country, if they have good sort

of problem solving skills, that's something they kind of do automatically,

I mean, Mirka did that. She, she would sit beside somebody who, not to lean on, but somebody who complemented her skills, because she was very good at research. So, I think at first, you know what I mean, they would just come in and be quite kind of alone. Then, as they got to know the class, they might sit beside somebody that they worked well with and that might not be the same person that they're most friendly with outside class, to have a working relationship with somebody. So, you might have someone who is a good English speaker and they can help them with their language, but maybe that person, maybe their maths isn't so good and that, you know, Mirka could help them with, you know, their percentages or whatever it was. So, it kind of worked two ways.

Interviewer:

Erm, thinking about, erm, teacher training, or kind of lecturer training, do you think there's anything that could be added to that, that, erm, for...?

Pauline:

I mean, I think that probably it would be very useful now to have a short course, you know, just even a day course or something for lecturers because, certainly, when I went through mine, and that wasn't all that long ago, there was nothing, virtual-, you know, really, absolutely nothing.

Interviewer: Any kind of topics that you would think would be good within it?

Pauline: I think just even, erm, you know, I mean, lecturers talking together, a kind of workshop, you know what I mean, where you do some of the things you talk about.

Also know, knowing what's available, knowing what, erm, sources of help and sources of support, so knowing what clubs they go to, erm, knowing how to maybe contact somebody, having any contacts in the college of the people who do speak particular languages. So, if you've got a student who speaks Bulgarian, does anyone else in this college speak Bulgarian, so if you get stuck with something, you've got another person, who could perhaps sit down with this student, occasionally, and talk to them in their own language.

So, actually, when I think about that, that kind of mentor like that, or something like that would be quite good. A mentoring system for the students as well.

But yeah, knowing, a short course, as I say, a day or half a day, it would basically explain to lecturers what's available because we don't know unless we go and try and find out, and now, I mean, there's so many forms, and everything appears at the last minute.

Again, students, typically, erm, will say at the start of the year, 'I'm fine, I'm fine, I'm fine.' because their idea is I won't get on this course or I won't be allowed to progress on this course if I admit I'm not coping, but then when they're confident enough to know that they'll be kept on the course, that's when, and they also know maybe an exam is coming up, because that's what's really happened with, erm, accounts at the moment. They've turned round in the last sort number of weeks and said, 'Oh, well, I want extra time.' because now they're confident enough that they're not going to be put off the course but they see the advantage of having that extra time.

So, maybe, maybe having a system at the start of the year, where students got the support and help, on an almost compulsory basis, and it was a case of 'Right, okay, well, if you're, if we feel at some point in the year, you don't need that support and help, then we'll withdraw that.' but, you know, you automatically get that as part of your course, as somebody who doesn't speak English as their first language because, I mean, there *has* to be problems. There can't, I mean, it must be really hard.

Interviewer:

It must be, yeah. Erm, if, if you were giving advice to a new lecturer, erm, if he was going to have a, a student for the first time, erm, a second language student the first time, what would you say to them?

Pauline:

Erm, if it, if it was a student that I knew, I would talk to them about, I would give them advice regarding that particular student, do you know what I mean? So, rather than give them sort of generic advice, if, if someone was going to get Mirka, I would give them information about Mirka. If someone was going to get Martin, I would give them information about Martin, do you know what I mean? So, it's more general advice about the student rather than specific advice like that but, then, if, you know, like, erm, if it was Bijon, I would say, you know, encourage him, if he doesn't understand, encourage him to use the dictionary, you know what I mean?

Again, I suppose that's, that would be the key advice that I would give any lecturer, really with any student. You know, it's what we all try and do, encourage them to be independent as far as possible, you know. There's a big, any new lecturer coming in, there's a big ego trip in being, erm, necessary to a student, do you know what I mean? Erm, whereas, really our job is making ourselves redundant, making ourselves unnecessary, do you know what I mean, the student's working independently then. So, getting the student to be able to work with resources, getting them to work with, with, erm, dictionaries and so on, I mean, I would, I would just keep an eye out, and that's what I would advise someone to do.

Interviewer:

That's good, right. Thinking about the college, in general, do you think, erm, the senior management team is aware of the issues, erm, that you're facing with these students or any sort of, because, what they're, given that they're

actively trying to recruit second language students in a, in quite a big way, erm, do you think actually that they're aware of the issues that may crop up?

Pauline: No, no. (Laughter) Short answer, no.

Interviewer: What do you, what do you think that they need to do, in terms of the college, in, in general, to sort of try and make sure that these students are successful?

Pauline: I think, really, exactly the same as like the Disability Act, you know what I mean, you know, like the Race Relations Act? The Disability Act says that, you know, you don't wait until you've got a student's who's blind to put, erm, resources into place for a blind student. You know, before you go and recruit a blind student, you should have the resources there, and I think it's exactly the same way.

You know, they have to have resources there for students, and they have to think about that student's experience, and not just in terms of education, because I think that, you know, whether it's foreign students or whether it's local students, a lot of the reasons why our students succeed or fail on courses are social reasons, and I think that to ignore them, and I think people coming from another country, that's, that's more important for them, as I say, the earning money, but also the social

side of things, the missing home, the being part of a different culture, they're, they're, they're like totally out of water, do you know what I mean?

They're, they're in a completely strange environment, and I think that, you know, having, having, erm, contact, having specific college contact, ways to contact, and group support for other students, I think it's great that the students' association is much more active this year because that does create a focus for all students, and it's not just about foreign students getting in touch with other foreign students, it's also foreign students integrating with the local students, and I think whatever's going on, so I think that the social side of the college is really important for foreign students. It's also important for our students, but maybe not as much.

Interviewer: Yes, okay. Erm, is there anything else that you, you feel that, you know, you'd like to add that I've not asked about, or...?

Pauline: Erm, (9 sec gap) no, I don't think so.

Interviewer: Right, well, thank you very much. That's been very, very helpful, lots of good ideas. Thank you.

END AUDIO

b) Student Amy : 1st Interview April 2008

Duration: 08:27

Interviewer: Thanks for doing this. Can I just ask you to say your name and say where you are from?

Amy: Yea, My name is Amy and I come from Hong Kong.

Interviewer: Ok thanks, Eh, What course are you studying?

Amy: Intro to childcare.

Interviewer: Emmm, why did you choose this course

Amy: Why (nervous laugh)

Interviewer: Eh hum,

Amy: I don't know (laugh) I think this course interesting

Interviewer: You thought it was interesting, was it your first choice?

Amy: Yes,

Interviewer: Emm, what level of education did you get to your home country, in Hong Kong,

Amy: Pardon?

Interviewer: Did you go to college in Hong Kong or .. did you stop after school?

Amy: I study school in Hong Kong

Interviewer: You went to school in Hong Kong, so you didn't go to college in Hong Kong, no. Emm have you... have you... done a course in English before or was this the first English course you've....

Amy: I done the English in Hong Kong.

Interviewer: so you studied English in Hong Kong but you didn't emm eh where you were at school was your emm, education in Chinese

Amy: yea

Interviewer: Yea ok, emm, quite often students eh, have to overcome difficulties to come to college is there any difficulties you had to overcome?

Amy: eh, yes, sometimes I don't understand what the people talking about

Interviewer: right..., ok, what people is that, is that students or tutors or everyone

Amy: Everyone (slight laugh)

Interviewer: Everyone, eh, is there any particular time that you don't understand

Amy: aww just eh... sometimes if they talking too fast, yes

Interviewer: Uhhu, is there anything that you can do to..., oh sorry is there anything that they can do to help you? ... What could they do?

Amy: eh... they [unintelligible] note for me and talking slowly

Interviewer: talking slowly emhmm, ... Have...What difficulties have you had in the course so far?

Amy: eh difficult...., eh to do the report need too many words for that

Interviewer: so you find that you you you haven't got the vocabulary or enough English for the reports

Amy: Yea

Interviewer: Have you found anything easy?

Amy: Yea

Interviewer : What have you found?

Amy: eh in the practical for the sometimes for the.... eh we got the test I feel it is ok not easy but ok

Interviewer : Its ok yea, its ok (laughs).....emm when you have difficulties (cough) ... excuse me emmm when you have difficulties do you get any help for them? Do you ask for help?

Amy: No, I just go to home and get a dictionary

Interviewer: So you try and help yourself?

Amy: Yea

Interviewer: Emm How do you get on with your class mates ... eh..... your, your.. people, the other students how do you find them? Do they..?

Amy: They help me a lot and sometimes I don't understand things and [unintelligible] for me and then I can see it and after, eh, finish the class for me they talking about for me the course today

Interviewer: So you find them helpful, you know emmm. Have you managed to make friends in the course or?

Amy: Yea, I make friends

Interviewer: Yes, that's good. And are the people on the course about the same age as you?

Amy: Yes about sixteen to eighteen

Interviewer: sixteen to eighteen. Yea, emmm, thinking about being in class, emm, and the style of teaching and homework are there any differences between eh, how you studied in Hong Kong and eh how we study in Scotland?

Amy: How different?

Interviewer: Is it different to studying in Scotland to studying in Hong Kong?

Amy: Yes,

Interviewer: What's the differences?

Amy: Eh, this we left for the study Hong Kong you need, very hard because eh.....how you say it..... Hong Kong use the Chinese, it is so easy for me the English is my second language,

Interviewer: yes, so it's just, it's just, it's just the language but is there any differences in teaching style, emm, do you get less homework or more homework?

Amy: Yes, we get more homework in Hong Kong as well

Interviewer: More homework so do you prefer that?or

Amy: Yes,

Interviewer: Yea, you know emm.... Has any of the differences of being in class in Hong Kong and being in a class in Scotland given you any problems?

Amy: any problem?

Interviewer: Uhhueh

Amy: Not much

Interviewer: Not much ok. Have you used the support services in the college?...like the students support services or the bursary or anything like that

Amy: No

Interviewer: No, ok emm, sigh, emm, How often do you speak English outside the college?

Amy: How often?

Interviewer: Yes, do you speak Chinese at home?

Respondent: Yes

Amy: Yea emm, so emmm do you only speak Chinese in college, sorry only speak English in college or do you speak quite a lot of English?

Respondent: eh, I speak English in college and sometimes go home I speak English to my sister and my brother and I am working, I am working in the Chinese restaurant need to speak English

Interviewer: Oh right, ok. So how long have you been learning English?

Amy: How long?

Interviewer: Uhhum

Amy: about.... seven years

Interviewer: seven years and have you had any problems with the language?..... other than people speaking too fast

Amy: Yes,(laughs) speaking too fast eh, they use the, I don't understand the words,

Interviewer: right so they use lots of words you don't understand

Amy: Yea

Interviewer: How do you deal with that

Amy: em?

Interviewer: How do you, how do you get round that?

Amy: They least explain to me how they mean

Interviewer: so you ask.. you ask them to explain?

Amy: Yea

Interviewer: and do you find people are helpful and they ask a lot, eh and they answer a lot? Yea. Em is there anything that you think would, that the college could do to make things easier for you. Is there any sort of help your, that you think that would be good to get that you are not getting?

Amy: I have no idea

Interviewer: No idea, if you think of things later on you could always come back and tell me because one of the things we are trying to do is emm look at what people need to be successful in their course and .. you know to enjoy their course and eh if there is something you think we could do come back and tell me.

Amy: uhhu

Interviewer: Thank you very much that has been very helpful.

END OF AUDIO

Appendix J: Extracts from code book for Thematic Analysis

Example of staff codes

Code: Culture

Brief Description: Differences in cultures between L1 students / staff & L2 students.

Full Description: Perceived differences in cultures and differences in behaviour because of culture.

When to use: When there is an example of **the difference**.

When not to use: When there is no example otherwise code to attitudes

Example: 'We had to finish at a time to allow him to go to his prayers,'

Code: Ideal Students

Brief Description: Positive and negative attributes/attitudes of students

Full Description: Respondents perceptions of both the positive and negative attributes/attitudes of students with help or hinder the students in their studies.

When to use: When respondents talk about students attributes or attitudes in relations to their ability to study. Respondents may also their own attributes/attitudes towards studying when they were a student and compare this to their current students.

When not to use: When the attitude or attribute does not relate to the ability to study.

Example: 'But they weren't very pro-active,'

Code: Language

Brief Description: Issues with language

Full Description: Respondents perceptions of language issues both spoken and written when communicating in either an academic or social setting.

When to use: When respondents are discussing either spoken or written English of the L2 students as they relate to the students ability to communicate either academically or socially.

When not to use: When discussing English classes (code to support) or attitudes to extra classes (code to attitudes)

Example: 'Their English is not very good'

Example of student codes

Code: Challenges

Brief Description: Challenges faced by students

Full Description: Challenges faced by students not only in their studies but also to attend college

When to use: Challenges in studying, finance, social inclusion

When not to use: Challenges not related to college (e.g. finding employment)

Example: I've got to work to afford paying my college fees and rent

Code: Identity

Brief Description: Students' identity

Full Description: Where students describe themselves or actions which protect/establish an identity

When to use: When students are talking about themselves

When not to use: When students are talking about the identity of others

Example: I can say kids because I am over 50 and they can be my daughters,

Code: Language

Brief Description: Written and Spoken Language

Full Description: Students perceptions of their language skills in isolation or in relations to others students in their class.

When to use: When students talk about themselves and/or compare themselves to others

When not to use: When no examples are given

Example: Sometimes my spelling was better, even better

Appendix K: Nvivo Screen shots

The screenshot shows the Nvivo software interface with the 'Internals' search results table. The table lists various sources and their associated nodes, references, and creation/modification dates.

| Name | Nodes | References | Created On | Created By | Modified On | Modified By |
|--|-------|------------|------------------|------------|------------------|-------------|
| International Officer Yen (May 2011) | 10 | 94 | 02/05/2012 18:17 | AS | 02/05/2012 19:21 | AS |
| Lecturer Tom (2009) | 9 | 59 | 02/05/2012 18:17 | AS | 02/05/2012 18:17 | AS |
| Lecturer Wallace (2009) | 8 | 45 | 02/05/2012 18:17 | AS | 02/05/2012 18:17 | AS |
| Lecturer Pauline 1st Interview (May 2009) | 9 | 106 | 02/05/2012 18:17 | AS | 02/05/2012 18:17 | AS |
| Lecturer Pauline 2nd Interview (Sept 2011) | 8 | 56 | 02/05/2012 18:17 | AS | 02/05/2012 18:17 | AS |
| Lecturer Rhona (2009) | 9 | 70 | 02/05/2012 18:17 | AS | 02/05/2012 18:17 | AS |
| Lecturer Susan (2009) | 9 | 63 | 02/05/2012 18:17 | AS | 02/05/2012 18:17 | AS |
| Lecturer Victor (2009) | 9 | 69 | 02/05/2012 18:17 | AS | 02/05/2012 20:07 | AS |

The screenshot shows the Nvivo software interface with the 'Nodes' search results table. The table lists various nodes and their associated sources, references, and creation/modification dates.

| Name | Sources | References | Created On | Created By | Modified On | Modified By |
|---------------|---------|------------|------------------|------------|------------------|-------------|
| Attitudes | 9 | 82 | 02/05/2012 18:23 | AS | 06/05/2012 18:35 | AS |
| culture | 9 | 53 | 02/05/2012 18:23 | AS | 06/05/2012 18:07 | AS |
| future plans | 6 | 21 | 02/05/2012 18:38 | AS | 06/05/2012 18:32 | AS |
| Ideal Student | 9 | 111 | 02/05/2012 18:21 | AS | 06/05/2012 18:29 | AS |
| Language | 9 | 125 | 02/05/2012 18:20 | AS | 06/05/2012 18:11 | AS |
| Plagiarism | 3 | 18 | 04/05/2012 07:34 | AS | 30/01/2013 07:20 | AS |
| Progress | 9 | 61 | 02/05/2012 18:19 | AS | 06/05/2012 18:36 | AS |

Below the table, a detailed view of a specific node is shown. The node is 'Language' and it is associated with the source 'International Officer Yen (May 2011)'. The node has 15 references coded, representing 15.43% coverage. The text of the node is:

Reference 1 - 0.30% Coverage
 Other sides, they have a lot of problems and challenges in the past. The difficulty for them is not just the language barrier.

Reference 2 - 0.45% Coverage
 The other students, they are aware of the ESOL class, but either because they have to do work outside, they do not have time. Or they feel their English is good enough to cope the course.

Appendix L: Information and Consent forms

Consent Form

Research Title: Inclusion into a Scottish Further Education College:

The experience of recent migrants for whom English has not been the language of previous education.

Researcher: Angela Smith Open University Doctorate of Education (EdD) Student

- 1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
- 2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason.
- 3. I agree to take part in the above study.
- 4. I agree to the interview / focus group / consultation being audio recorded.
- 5. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications.
- 6. I understand that anonymity cannot be guaranteed.

| | | |
|---------------------|-------|-----------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Name of Participant | Date | Signature |

| | | |
|--------------------|-------|-----------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Name of Researcher | Date | Signature |

Respondent Information Sheet

Research Title: Inclusion into a Scottish Further Education College:

The experience of recent migrants for whom English has not been the language of previous education.

Researcher: Angela Smith Open University Doctorate of Education (EdD) Student

About the research:

The research will take place at Dumfries and Galloway College.

The main purpose of the research is to find out about the experiences of students in the college who do not speak English as their first language. It will concentrate on students' experiences in the college rather than those that are outside of the college sphere of influence.

The research will take the form of a case study which will interview students and the some members of staff who teach or support them. During the interviews you will invited to answer questions but also give information which you feel is important but has not been asked about.

Because of the small scale of this research project and the small number of people involved anonymity cannot be guaranteed.

You will have the right to withdraw from the research at any time and the final research will not include any data gathered about you if you request this.

Appendix M: Scottish Qualification Authority Assessment Arrangements for candidates who have English as an additional language



Assessment arrangements for candidates who have English as an additional language

Candidates who have English as an additional language are allowed to use a bilingual dictionary in both internal assessments and external examinations, with the exception of assessments in English, ESOL, and the candidate's first language.

The only dictionaries allowed are bilingual translation dictionaries (word for word without explanation of terms). These should only be requested for candidates who are literate in their first language and who need to use a dictionary. Electronic dictionaries are also allowed provided they are also simple bilingual translation dictionaries and any personal user word lists etc have been disabled. All candidates are allowed an extra 10 minutes per hour for using the dictionary. Please note that this extra time is not permitted unless the candidate uses the dictionary.

You must seek approval from SQA to use the bilingual dictionary in external examinations by submitting the *English as an Additional Language* electronic form, which you can find on our secure website.

For internal assessments, you do not need to seek approval from SQA for candidates to use a bilingual dictionary.

As an exceptional arrangement candidates may also be allowed to use word lists for subject-specific vocabulary which cannot be found in some bilingual dictionaries. These lists must be without explanation of terms and must be approved by SQA before the candidate undertakes the assessment. A request for this must be submitted in an email to SQA's Assessment Arrangements Team at aarequests@sqa

If you wish to request any other form of assessment arrangement for a candidate who has English as an additional language, you must submit your request in writing by e-mailing full details to ea1.requests@sqa.org.uk.

You must provide robust evidence of the candidate's difficulty or additional support needs, how the requested assessment arrangement meets these needs, and evidence that the arrangement requested reflects the candidate's on-going additional support provided in class.

Assessments in Modern Languages

Modern Languages – All candidates may consult one monolingual foreign dictionary for the language being assessed, and/or one foreign language/English dictionary during the Reading and Writing papers of the examination.

Where a candidate's first language is not English and they are sitting an unfamiliar Modern Language, they would also be allowed the use of a native language/modern language dictionary in all papers.